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D. T. Bass, Mgr.

The Wonders of Prophecy

OR

WHAT ARE WE TO BELIEVE?

BY

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AUTHOR OF

The Inspiration and Accuracy of the Holy Scriptures, The Bible, its Structure and Purpose, The New Biblical Guide, etc.

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Third Edition, Revised

Fifteenth Thousand.

"UNDER THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION I FIND ACTUAL PROPHECY, AND I FIND IT IN NO OTHER."—*Pascal.*

New York:

GOSPEL PUBLISHING HOUSE,

D. T. Bass, Manager,

54 WEST TWENTY-SECOND STREET.

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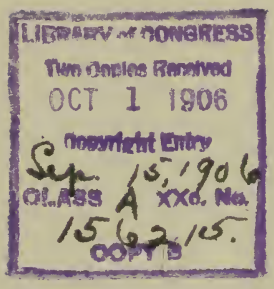
1906



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CHAPTER I.

A SERIOUS QUESTION.

It is sometimes asked in petulant indolence. The writer has a vivid recollection of its being put by a rather feeble, and not very worthy, member of a country church. He possessed a copy of "Brown's Bible," and it was a favourite exercise with him to spend Sunday afternoon in comparing the exposition he had heard in the morning with the remarks in the commentary. These did not always agree, and disagreement was never noted without annoyance. One Sunday there chanced to be a more than ordinarily wide divergence. The minister happened to call a day or two afterwards, and, having spent his strength in explaining and defending the position he had dared to take in defiance of "Brown," he was rewarded by the exclamation: "What *are* we to believe!"

It might be well for all men, and it would certainly be more agreeable to many, were there no divergent opinions. But it is not well for any man, when he discovers that all do not think alike, to faint amid the strife of tongues and to "throw the whole thing up." There are few truths which have not had to run the gauntlet of controversy; and those truths are our possession to-day solely because there happened to be men who, while they loved peace, would not part with conviction though the holding to it meant war. Science as well as faith has had its martyrs. They were brave

enough to leave the beaten track in search of truth; and, when they found it, they were not to be frightened from their possession by the chorus of doubt and condemnation with which they were assailed. That man will do little in the world who can be terrified by clamour, or who surrenders convictions because all are not agreed as to their truth. The manly man feels that, in such differences, there is a call to inquire and to make his own decision. The rest, though it pains one to say it, are no great loss. The wind that sweeps across the threshing-floor takes only the chaff away; or, if it take with it too the light, withered, heartless, grain, the wheat that is left clean and sound is all the worthier of the garner.

Were such the only lips to ask the question we might pass it lightly by. But it is sometimes asked in despair. There is many a tragedy in these last days which never gets into the newspapers; which is played out to the bitter end in obscurity and silence; which no eye witnesses, and neither tongue nor pen relates. Let us glance at a few typical instances. A lad leaves a northern village, in which he had been born and brought up, for one of our large southern cities. He has come from a pious home where impressions had been made which fond parents hoped would be an abiding protection against the temptations which he went forth to meet. And at first it was so. He sought and found, in his new home, associations similar to those with which he had so long been familiar. He breathed a kindred social, intellectual, and spiritual atmosphere. He was found at prayer-meetings, and he rejoiced in young men's religious societies. Between him and heresy, or unbelief, there lay a great gulf of pious horror, which shut off all communication, and which, one would have imagined, effectually disposed of any dread of infection.

Some years passed and then there came a change. He began to read. The pleasures of "the Pierian

spring" allured him on. He wandered in new, and hitherto undreamt of, fields. And, as the centre of interest changed its place, there was a corresponding transfer of affection. The old resorts were less frequented. The limitations of old companionships became painfully apparent. They were judged of more by what they lacked than by what they had.

By-and-bye another stage was reached. His reading had hitherto been of a colourless character so far as Christianity was concerned. But now in the course of his journeying he lighted upon a country whose thought and speech were diverse from all he had hitherto known. The beliefs which he had till then cherished were regarded with pitying contempt, or were spoken of as if no sane man could have patience with them. All this he read with pain, but also with increasing curiosity. There must surely be some grounds, real or supposed, for the position which was assumed. What were they? From Matthew Arnold he passed to the *Leben Jesu* of David Frederic Strauss. The deadlier potion seemed at first less objectionable than the other. It was a relief to turn from the pretentiousness of Arnold to the studied fairness and the transparent frankness of Strauss. But it was still a thorny pathway. With grief and deepening sadness, one conviction after another was laid aside, till all were buried in a grave for which it seemed no resurrection morn was possible. It was a terrible awaking. The holy tenderness and glowing hopes of his earlier faith died as the day dies when the sun has sunk beneath the western horizon. Deep darkness settled down on past, present, and future. He wrote to a friend "I have ceased to believe in Christ, Christianity, or the Bible."

Part of another life-drama was enacted in the same city, a few years earlier. It was that of a youth from another district and with a very different preparation for the struggle. No religious training had either biased or blessed his boyhood. Religion belonged to a

world with which he had nothing whatever to do, and with which he desired no closer connection. He had gone to church just as he had gone to school, from compulsion rather than choice, and the Sunday exercises had made still less impression than the other. He must have heard the texts given out; and, though his thoughts were wandering far away, he must have heard parts at least of many a sermon; but they were remembered quite as little as the humming of the bees in the fields, through which he passed to reach his home.

A guest came one evening, who, for lack of better accommodation, had to share the boy's bedroom, and the stranger seized the opportunity to speak to him about that of which he had never thought—his soul. The result could not have been encouraging to the good man, and the circumstance was long remembered by the subject of his solicitude with anything but gratitude. Why people should take such dire offence at plain dealing in this of all matters—why they should be more indignant at the question whether they are bound for heaven than at the inquiry whether they think of going to New Zealand, is a matter which philosophers have yet to explain.

Some time after his arrival in the city, conscience began to assert itself; but to religion he was as indifferent as ever. A friend of the people, with whom he boarded, used occasionally to spend an evening with him and them. He was a Secularist, and belief in the existence of God was argued against and scoffed at. The youth was unable to refute the arguments advanced, but he recoiled from the dark abyss of Atheism. The story is told of a lady who, having fallen into a trance and having been buried alive, regained consciousness as the grave-digger, who had afterwards unearthed the supposed corpse, was severing a finger in order to obtain the ring which had been left upon it. And so the attempt to rob him of this last conviction seemed to arouse his long-slumbering

mental and moral nature. The question was now eagerly asked which had never passed those lips before—"What are we to believe?" An advertisement regarding *The Defender,* a periodical edited by Dr. Rutherford, of Newcastle, was noticed. The magazine was regularly purchased and eagerly read. It met his need. A spirit that was willing to believe if it only could, was, so to speak, taken by the hand and led onward into brightening light.

We may cite one case more. Two clergymen, stationed in a University town, are walking out into the country, as they often do, on Monday morning. Both are young men and in their first pastorates, the elder of the two having had a couple of years' more experience of ministerial life than his companion. There is a sadness, however, in this morning's conversation. In the confidence of a very sincere and close friendship, the elder is relating some of his difficulties. He professes himself unable any longer to accept the ordinary representations of the Atonement. His friend is sympathetic but astonished. To him everything is clear. He refers to one passage of Scripture after another, but the other is neither convinced nor helped.

A few years have passed. The friends are now separated by distance, but the younger has reason to remember that morning's conversation. He comprehends the doubts to-day, the strength and misery of which were hid from him a year or two ago. The ground is now slipping from beneath his own feet. He has been increasingly attracted to a literature, the one grand dogma of which is the Fatherhood of God. It was a belief which, as *he* grasped it, had more of sentiment than of strength, but it had become to him practically the whole evangel. Deductions are sometimes made slowly even by a logical mind, but once made they are bound on the soul with bands of iron. Looked at from the new standpoint, old beliefs lost their reasonableness, and even their credibility. His

faith in the central doctrine of the Scripture went as completely as his friend's had formerly done.

He did his work as best he could; but he was not at rest. The gospel message, as he now viewed it, had lost much of its urgency. There was an uneasy feeling, too, that he was at war with the Book which he professed to accept wholly, and all the counsels of which he acknowledged it his duty to declare. Then there came to him a period of enforced leisure. He had time to look back upon the past, to weigh his work, to judge his life. The retrospect seemed ghastly. He asked himself what had been the outcome of his toil, and confessed that the answer, if stated truly, was—a salary. Measured by spiritual result it was nothing, and less than nothing. He was interested in the special truth on which he might happen to preach on the Sunday, and he believed that the people were also interested; but, when Monday came, he and they were just where they had been before. The studying and preaching led neither him nor them to anything that satisfied and saved. Theirs was a wandering, not a progress. Then came a time of terrible darkness, and of soul wrestling. But there was hope in the ordeal, for the wrestling was, like his of old, a wrestling with God. Light dawned, and it found him humbled and willing to be led. It gave him a truer hold on Christ, a deeper and more childlike trust in God's word. He still serves, and not without result. The other lies to-day in a suicide's grave.

These are no fancy sketches; they are photographs. They remind us in how many ways and by how many lips this question is being asked—WHAT ARE WE TO BELIEVE? Is there any answer? Is there anything which will put dark doubts to rest, and leave the heart with certainty and God? The old ideas regarding inspiration are not, generally speaking, the ideas of to-day. "Verbal inspiration" is spoken of as a contradiction in terms, and rejected as a superstition and an absurdity. The clear and sharply-defined defence of

former times has given place to wavering and apology. We are told that the language of scripture is not to be too closely pressed. We are taught rather to expect mistakes in science and in history, till we begin to wonder wherein the inspiration of the Bible lies. Is there anything which will settle these questions—which will show whether we have a Book that is not man's but God's, and which will prove once for all how its words are to be taken? I believe there is.

CHAPTER II.

CAN THE QUESTION BE ANSWERED?

We can imagine no graver position than that of the man who takes his seat in the Jury-box at a criminal trial. He is bound by his oath and by his duty to his country, not only "to well and truly try," but also to declare his judgment. It is his to decide whether he shall brand a man with lasting infamy and crush the hearts of parents, wife, children, friends, beneath a load which nothing can remove. He is asked to say whether a man, whose good name, liberty, and life, are as sacred as his own, shall be consigned to years of a stern and terrible prison discipline, or, it may be, to death at the hands of the executioner.

And yet it sometimes happens that one piece of evidence impresses the mind of the Jury with such overwhelming conviction that they cannot hesitate, though the gravest of all issues depends upon their decision. A large employer of labour, for example, has been found dead on the way to his own home. The cause of death was a gun-shot wound, and it was evident that he had been murdered. One of his workmen, whom he had discharged after a personal altercation, is suspected, and placed upon his trial. The quarrel, and the consequent

discharge are proved. Witnesses also testify that the prisoner threatened to be revenged; that he was seen in the neighbourhood at the time of the murder; and that a gun, which had been recently fired, was found in his house. So far there is ground for strong suspicion. But, when it is proved that the wadding used in loading the gun was found in an adjacent hedge, was unrolled, and discovered to be part of a letter addressed to the prisoner, and that the letter itself, from which the piece had been torn, was found in his possession, suspicion becomes certainty. Both parts are laid before the Jury, and in that moment every hope of the murderer's escape vanishes. Have we anything in the whole range of the Christian evidences which will prove the claims of Scripture as convincingly as the fragments of the letter prove the man's guilt? I believe we have. I believe the evidence placed in our hands by the fulfilled predictions of Scripture does more.

In the dedication to his book on the Prophecies, Bishop Newton refers to some conversations he had with Marshal Wade. The latter laughed at the alleged proof of Christianity from the fulfilment of prophecy, and all argument was set aside with the observation that the predictions were written after the events. The Bishop urged in reply that there were several prophecies which were not fulfilled till recent times, and several more which were beyond doubt written centuries before the events happened. The Marshal was startled, "and said he must acknowledge that, if this point could be proved to satisfaction, there would be no argument against such plain matter of fact; it would certainly convince him, and, he believed, would be the readiest way to convince every reasonable man of the truth of revelation."

That judgment is one which all must endorse. If it is possible to produce evidence of the kind referred to by Bishop Newton, then the inspiration of the Scrip-

tures is no longer open to doubt, nor is the existence of Him from whom they are said to have come. As this is a point of such vast importance let us

WEIGH THE ARGUMENT

for a moment. None have better information in regard to our own families than we ourselves possess. We know the present condition and the past history of each member of them. We are aware of the circumstances which will largely influence their future, and we see even now how these circumstances are likely to affect them. Say, then, that we are asked to go forward in thought only ten years, and to state distinctly what the condition of each member of the family will be at the end of that time; to say who will be alive, if any; who, if any, dead; in what place each will then be residing; who will be in prosperous circumstances, who in circumstances the reverse. How should we meet the demand? Should we entertain the questions seriously even for a moment? Much as we do know, none but a madman or a fool could suppose us capable of resolving such points as these.

Again: we all have some acquaintance with the city, town, or place, in which we dwell. We can say whether there is promise of increased population and prosperity, or whether a decrease of both is threatened. But, thoroughly as we know the place and its prospects, will any one of us venture to leave the region of opinion and surmise, and speak minutely and positively of what its condition will be a hundred years hence? Or, to take another illustration: there are men now guiding the destinies of Europe who have studied politics for half a century. Many of them have had long and accurate knowledge of the tendencies and resources of the various countries, and of the dangers which threaten them from without and from within.

Ask the man, who has the keenest vision of them all, what will be the condition at the close of the next half century of India, or Germany, or France, or Great Britain. Ask whether Switzerland, for example, will then retain her independence, or have been seized by one of her bigger neighbors, and in the latter event, by which. Suppose these questions gravely put, and gravely entertained, will not the answer be, that the things which we wish to know lie far beyond the range of the keenest sight possessed by man—that the wisest, though he may shrewdly conjecture, cannot write a single page, nor pen a single line, of the story of the future?

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to emphasize this by further illustrations. But literature abounds with proofs of how completely, notwithstanding all we say about insight and foresight, the future is hid from us. Malte Brun in his description of Prussia, says that "from its proximity to Russia it must be in many respects *a secondary power,*" little anticipating the political developments of present times. "It is curious," Henry Greville writes under date March 20, 1848, "that Lord Hardinge, who arrived here on Thursday, passed two hours at Vienna, and saw Metternich, who spoke of passing events without the slightest apprehension, and said that it was possible there might be some disturbances in different parts of the Empire, but that they would be put down without any difficulty, and that he had no intention of making any concessions at this time. Four days afterwards he was obliged to fly from Vienna, and his house was sacked and burnt."*

Instances of similar blindness might easily be multiplied, but I mention three only which have a common bearing on one of the greatest events of modern times

* *Leaves from the Dairy of Henry Greville,* Vol. I., p. 243.

—the regeneration of Italy. Macaulay concludes his essay on Machiavelli with the words: "In the church of Santa Croce a monument was erected to his memory . . . . which will be approached with still deeper homage *when the object to which his public life was devoted shall be attained, when the foreign yoke shall be broken, when a second Procida shall avenge the wrongs of Naples, when a happier Rienzi shall restore the good estate of Rome,* when the streets of Florence and Bologna shall again resound with their ancient war-cry, *'Popolo; popolo; muoiano i tiranni.'*" This was written in 1827. Who knew that in the days of men then living all these aspirations would be fulfilled —that every tyrant should have fled, and that the land be no more darkened with the shadow of an oppressor?

In 1851, Mr. Gladstone published his letter regarding the condition of Naples. Between twenty and thirty thousand political prisoners lay crowded together in the fortresses and jails. No man raised his voice on behalf of liberty, or even fell under suspicion of holding liberal opinions, but was sent into exile or cast into a dungeon. Mr. Gladstone published his indignant appeal to the public opinion of Europe, thinking, perhaps, that the Neapolitan Government might be shamed into humanity, but seeing no other hope for a cruelly oppressed people. Who could have foreseen that before another ten years had passed that land should be free—free as it had not been for ages; and that a fugitive from his beloved Italy, then wandering on the far-distant shores of America, was the man through whom the deliverance should come? Who was then able, with his hand upon these facts, to warn the tyrant, or to console the down-trodden?

The last and not least startling instance, which I cite, of man's ignorance of the future, is found in a letter written on the eve of Italy's complete deliverance. As

late as the Spring of 1866 George A. Sala wrote as follows regarding Venice: "When is the day of her deliverance to come, and when are the tears which, with but twelve months' intermission, have flowed for half a century, to be dried? She waits and waits, and the Italians wait too, clenching their hands, and grinding their teeth. . . . It is impossible to cross the frontier, or to be half-an-hour in the Austro-Venetian territory, without becoming aware that the Austrian 'Autograph'—as Mr. Thackeray called the double-headed eagle—has got a very tight grip of the country. . . As he is a very powerful eagle, strong on the wing and adamantine in the talons, *the contingency of his giving up his Venetian quarry is, to say the least, remote.* It is not impossible."* To these words he has appended the following note: "This was written in the Spring. In the Summer came Sadowa, and the Austrians gave up Venice."

"It is," as a veteran statesman once said, "the unexpected that happens." The anticipations of the most far-seeing, and the precautions of the wisest are mocked again and again by the bitter irony of events. We might as soon think to pluck the stars from heaven as to wrest its secrets from the future. The king, when he bade the advancing waves retire, was not more powerless than we, when we command the approaching days to appear and tell what things they bring. We cannot foresee even dimly the events of to-morrow, or of the next hour. We stand before a wall of impenetrable darkness. We have hopes and fears, but no certainties. Thoughts rise up within our bosom, but from the future there comes neither voice nor sign. If, then, this feat, which we rightly declare is impossible for man to perform, has been achieved—if the future *has* been read, and, not only years, but

* *Rome and Venice,* pp. 33-36.

centuries have yielded up their secrets—if we produce a book in which predictions, so numerous, and varied, and minute as to preclude all possibility of chance, were

RECORDED CENTURIES BEFORE

the events occurred in which they were startlingly fulfilled—will it be any longer possible to doubt that God is, and that this is His word to us? If evidence of this kind can really be produced, doubt will be an impossibility. And whether our evidence be of this kind the reader will now be able to judge.

CHAPTER III.

PREDICTIONS REGARDING TYRE AND SIDON.

To show the nature of the evidence we have to offer we take the case of

TYRE.

Its doom is predicted in the twenty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel. A graphic picture is drawn of its siege and capture by Nebuchadnezzar (verses 7-11). The powerful fleet of Tyre swept the sea, and prevented the complete investment of the city; but, after a siege of thirteen years, it was at last taken by the Chaldean army. With this part of the prophecy, however, we do not concern ourselves. The genuineness of the book of Ezekiel will not be questioned, but still it would be difficult to prove that the prophecy was uttered before this event took place.

More, however, was predicted. After describing the vengeance which the king of Babylon will inflict, the prophecy proceeds: "And THEY shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the waters" (verse 12). Let the change of person be noted. Having spoken of what Nebuchadnezzar will do, it is added, "And *they* shall," etc., as if others were to be joined with him in the work of destruction. Light is thrown upon this distinction in the third and fourth verses. God will cause many nations to come up against Tyre, "as the sea causes his waves to come

up" (verse 3). Shock will succeed to shock, till she is utterly desolate; "and they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock" (verse 4).

Previous to the fall of their ancient city, the Tyrians had removed the bulk of their treasure to an island in their possession, half a mile from the shore. Taught now by bitter experience, they resolved to trust themselves no more within walls, which had not round them the defence of a watery girdle. Tyre was mistress of the sea, and could defend herself there. The old city was therefore deserted, and no attempt was made to rebuild it after the Babylonian army had retired. So far the prophecy had been fulfilled, but only so far. Tyre was overthrown and spoiled; the noise of her songs had ceased; the sound of her harps was no more heard (verse 13); the great and joyous city was abased and desolate. But the ruins still stood. The words which declared that the stones and the timber should be cast into the sea, and the very dust be scraped from the city's site, had not been fulfilled; and it seemed most improbable that they ever would be. What could the words mean? Nebuchadnezzar had taken a full vengeance, but he had never thought of this. Even in his case, furious though he might be at the long-continued resistance, it would have been the very frenzy of revenge. Who then would be found to wreak such unheard-of vengeance upon the unoffending ruins?

More than two hundred and forty years rolled on, and there was no answer. For two and a half centuries those words of Scripture seemed a vain menace. Then the fame of Alexander's swift and all-conquering career sent a thrill of alarm through the East. The Tyrian ambassadors, who hastened to meet him, were favourably received. It seemed as if this storm-cloud were about to pass harmlessly over them. But suddenly the conqueror expressed a desire to worship

within their city. They knew only too well what that request meant. Alexander would not enter alone; and, once there, those who came as worshippers would remain as masters. The Tyrians resolved to abide the issue of war, rather than tamely hand over their city to the Macedonian king. Alexander's army marched to the sea-shore, and there, with half a mile of blue waters between them and it, stood the city they had come to attack. How could it be taken? Alexander's plan was speedily formed. He determined to construct a solid causeway through the sea, over which his forces might advance to the assault. And now this word, which had waited so long, was at last

LITERALLY FULFILLED.

The walls, and the towers, and the ruined houses, and palaces, and temples, of the ancient city were pulled down, and the stones and the timber of Tyre were laid "in the midst of the water." Her mounds of ruins were cleared away; and so great was the demand for material in this vast undertaking, that the very dust seems to have been scraped from the site and laid in the sea. Though centuries had passed after the word was spoken, and had seen no fulfilment, it was not forgotten; and the event declared that it was His word whose judgments, though they may linger long, come surely, and fall at last with resistless might.

I have dwelt upon this instance simply as an example of the kind of evidence we are able to bring forward. Indubitable though the prophecy is, I press for no conclusion from its fulfilment. It is of the utmost importance, in this inquiry, to place it beyond the possibility of doubt that we are dealing with veritable prophecies, and that the prediction is separated from the event by such an interval as must exclude the possibility of human foresight. It could be proved sat-

isfactorily to most minds that the book of Ezekiel was in existence long before the time of Alexander; but still doubt might creep in. The suggestion might be made that this particular prediction was added, or amended, by a later hand.

We shall therefore limit the present inquiry to those prophecies, regarding whose pre-existence to the events of which they speak, there can, in no mind, be any doubt whatever. I enter into no argument as to the age of the Old Testament Scriptures. I ask no admission to be made in regard to the antiquity of any one of the prophetical books. We shall come down to a time later than any that has ever been named for their origin, and our argument shall stand or fall by the prophecies which have been fulfilled since then. Everyone is fully satisfied that all the Books of the Old Testament were in existence before the time of our Lord. It is also known, that since that time, the Old Testament has been in

A TWOFOLD CUSTODY.

It has been in the hands of both Jews and Christians, between whom there could be no collusion. There is therefore absolute certainty that the prophecies are as old as the coming of Christ, and that, as they existed then, we possess them now. If then we take only such predictions as have been fulfilled at, or since, the beginning of the Christian era, every doubt will be removed and every cavil prevented in regard to the interval between the prophecy and the event; and within these limits we shall confine our present argument.

We have spoken of Tyre. There is one part of the prophecy which falls within the limits we have now set ourselves. We read (Ezek. xxvi. 13, 14): "I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound

of thy harps shall be no more heard . . . Thou shalt be

BUILT NO MORE."

This sentence of the divine judgment stands as a challenge to all time. It has been unanswered, save by the silence of generations. It is unanswered still. Palæ-Tyrus, the continental Tyre, which was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, and the ruins of which were cleared away by Alexander, has

NEVER BEEN REBUILT.

The site remains to-day without even a mound to mark it, and has to be determined solely by the notices in ancient writers which give its distance from the island Tyre.

Let us now turn for a moment from Tyre to

SIDON.

a neighboring and still more ancient city, which had fallen into comparative decay when Tyre was in its splendour. Sidon still remains, possessing even now about ten thousand inhabitants. It has its walls, its castle, and its mounds of ruins, which testify to the city's ancient extent and greatness. It is still, in that wretched country, a place of importance and strength. But in Ezekiel (xxviii. 20-23) there is a prediction regarding Sidon also: "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward Zidon, and prophesy against it, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. For I will send into her pestilence, AND BLOOD IN HER STREETS; AND THE WOUNDED SHALL FALL IN

THE MIDST OF HER WITH THE SWORD UPON HER ON EVERY SIDE." Observe the peculiar judgment of Sidon. Blood will be sent into her streets; her wounded shall fall in the midst of her; the sword is to be upon her on every side. No doom of extinction is pronounced against *her*. She is to be spared, but she is to suffer. One or two facts from her long history will show how the words have been fulfilled. Under the Persian dominion, when Tyre was deserted, Sidon was still great and populous. It rebelled under Artaxerxes Ochus, and, after a successful resistance, was betrayed to the enemy. When all hope of saving their city was gone, 40,000 citizens chose to die rather than submit to Persian vengeance. They shut themselves up with their wives and children, set fire to their dwellings, and perished amid the flames. The ashes of the city were sold for an immense sum. It was soon rebuilt by the citizens who had been absent at the time of the siege; but the doom of suffering still rested on it. During the Crusades it was taken several times and sacked. It was finally retaken from the Crusaders by Bibars, Sultan of Egypt and Syria, in 1290. But, in every commotion which has troubled that unhappy land, Sidon has had her share. It has been the scene of struggles between the Druses and the Turks, and, again, between the Turks and the French. So late as 1840, when Ibrahim Pasha was driven out of Syria, it was bombarded by the combined fleets of England, Austria, and Turkey, and captured by Admiral Napier, when again blood was sent into her streets, and her wounded fell in the midst of her. Suppose now that the names of Tyre and Sidon had

CHANGED PLACES

—that it had been said Tyre was to live, and Sidon to be utterly destroyed and never to be rebuilt, how complete would have been the refutation of Ezekiel's claim

to speak the word of the Lord! But how is it that this interchange of names did not take place? How is it that the city which has never been rebuilt is that of which this very thing and no other is prophesied, and that the city which has continued to exist is that which by the prophet is beheld as existing? And, even though this could be explained, a harder question remains. Sidon, like many another ancient city, might have dwindled into insignificance, so that, in its misery and defencelessness, it should have offered no resistance to any, and have tempted no one's cupidity. How has it happened that these words of the prophet paint her as she has been, and as she is to-day—a place of strength which age after age has been fought for, and has been passed on, wet with blood, from one possessor to another? There is one explanation in which alone, far though it takes us, the mind will rest with perfect satisfaction. It is, that He speaks here whose thought grasps the ages, and before whom the future has no veil, and who, in these proofs of His faithfulness, writes on man's heart the assurance, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

CHAPTER IV.

EGYPT.

Were we asked to say what country it is which is celebrated alike for the highest antiquity as for early, and unequaled, and long-continued, eminence in science, in the arts, in an enlightened and refined civilization, in luxury and magnificence—which has continued through all history a realm of wonder, and which still plays a part in the commerce and in the politics of the world—there could be but one answer. It is the land of Egypt. Like its own monuments, which, in their colossal greatness, bid a calm but proud defiance to the ravages of time, this land lives on. It is still the home of the descendants of its ancient masters. It still possesses the blessing of that rare fertility which proved the foundation of its past splendour. And if it does, like its monuments, show that in the struggle with time it has not come off unscathed, if the hand of decay has left its impress, it may find some satisfaction in the thought that to its long and proud career there is no parallel in the whole world beside.

But Egypt has also another claim to attention. In no land have the prophecies of the Old Testament received a more striking fulfilment than in this. In the misery of its people and the ruin of its cities it bears overwhelming, though involuntary, testimony to the claims

of Scripture. To part of this testimony we shall now listen.

THEBES,

the ancient capital of Egypt, was called by the Greeks Diospolis (the city of Jupiter). This appears to have been a literal translation of the Egyptian name No-Amon which appears in Nahum iii. 8. The latter name signifies the portion, or abode, of the god Amon, in whom the Greeks believed they recognized their own Zeus, the Roman Jupiter. The first part of this name, No, is that by which the city is generally designated in the Scriptures. The praises of the city with its hundred gates were sung of old by Homer; and the graphic picture which the poet presents of its populousness is outshone by the sober statement of Tacitus that it could send into the field an army of seven hundred thousand men. Diodorus Siculus, who visited Egypt about 50 B. C., and who saw Thebes only in its ruin, cannot restrain his admiration. The sun had never seen, he says, so magnificent a city. "Never was there a city," he exclaims, "which received so many offerings in silver, gold, and ivory, colossal statues, and obelisks, each cut from a single stone. Four principal temples are especially admired there, the most ancient of which was surpassingly grand and sumptuous. It was thirteen stadia (one mile and three-quarters) in circumference, and surrounded by walls twenty-four feet in thickness, and forty-five cubits high. The richness and workmanship of its ornaments were correspondent to the majesty of the building, which many kings contributed to embellish."

The testimony of Diodorus is amply confirmed by the remains. The stupendous ruins of Luxor and Carnac, parts of the ancient No which are still inhabited, excite to-day the same feelings of admiration and amazement. The great temple of Carnac "is the largest and most splendid ruin of which, perhaps, either

ancient or modern times can boast."* "All here is sublime, all majestic. With pain one tears oneself from Thebes. Her monuments fix the traveller's eyes, and fill his mind with vast ideas. Beholding colossal figures and stately obelisks which seem to surpass human powers, he says, 'Man has done this,' and feels himself and his species ennobled."†

Of the Great Hall Miss Amelia B. Edwards writes: "It is a place that has been much written about and often painted; but of which no writing and no art can convey more than a dwarfed and pallid impression. To describe it, in the sense of building up a recognizable image by means of words, is impossible. The scale is too vast; the effect too tremendous; the sense of one's own dumbness, and littleness, and incapacity, too complete and crushing. It is a place that strikes you into silence; that empties you, as it were, not only of words, but of ideas. Nor is this a first effect only. Later in the year, when we came back and moored close by, and spent long days among the ruins, I found I never had a word to say in the Great Hall, . . . I could only look and be silent.

"Yet to look is something if one can but succeed in remembering. . . . I stand once more among those mighty columns, which radiate into avenues from whatever point one takes them. I see them swathed in coiled shadows and broad bands of light. I see them sculptured and painted with shapes of Gods and Kings, with blazonings of royal names, with sacrificial altars, and forms of sacred beasts and emblems of wisdom and truth. The shafts of these columns are enormous. I stand at the foot of one—or of what seems to be the foot; for the original pavement seems to be buried seven feet below. Six men standing with outstretched arms, finger tip to finger tip, could barely span it round. It casts a shadow twelve feet in breadth—such

* Wilkinson. † Savary.

a shadow as might be cast by a tower. The capital that juts out so high above my head looks as if it might have been put there to support the heavens. It is carved in the semblance of a full-blown lotus, and glows with undying colours—colours that are still fresh, though laid on by hands that have been dust these three thousand years and more."*

The impression produced by another of these structures is equally overpowering. "The temple of Luxor presents to the traveller at once one of the most splendid groups of Egyptian grandeur. The extensive propylæon, with two obelisks and colossal statues in front, the thick groups of enormous columns, the variety of apartments and the sanctuary it contains, the beautiful ornaments which adorn every part of the walls and columns described by Mr. Hamilton, cause in the astonished traveller an oblivion of all he has seen before. If his attention be attracted to the north side of Thebes by the towering remains that project a great height above the wood of palm trees, he will gradually enter that forest-like assemblage of ruins and temples, columns, obelisks, colossi, sphinxes, portals, and an endless number of other astonishing objects that will convince him at once of the impossibility of a description. . . . It is absolutely impossible to imagine the scene displayed without seeing it. The most sublime ideas that can be formed from the most magnificent specimens of our present architecture would give a very incorrect picture of these ruins; for such is the difference, not only in magnitude, but in form, proportion, and construction, that even the pencil can convey but a faint idea of the whole. It appeared to me like entering a city of giants, who, after a long conflict, were all destroyed, leaving the ruins of their various temples as the only proofs of their former existence."† The tombs of the kings, excavated in the rugged, barren

* *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile,* pp. 219-220. † Belzoni.

mountains which skirt the city on the west have added to the astonishment with which travellers have surveyed this crowning marvel of the wonders of Egypt. "Nothing that has ever been said about them had prepared me for their extraordinary grandeur. You enter a sculptured portal in the face of these wild cliffs, and find yourself in a long and lofty gallery, opening or narrowing, as the case may be, into successive halls and chambers, all of which are covered with white stucco, and this white stucco brilliant with colors fresh as they were thousands of years ago. . . . They are, in fact, gorgeous palaces."*

But on these ruins another truth is written besides that of man's greatness, or the vanity of earthly glory. "Such vast and surprising remains are still to be seen," says Pococke, "of such magnificence and solidity, as may convince any one who beholds them that, without SOME EXTRAORDINARY ACCIDENT, they must have lasted for ever; which seems to have been the intention of the founders of them." Of this "extraordinary accident" the Scriptures have something quite as extraordinary to say.

In Ezekiel xxx. 14-16 there is mention made of No in each of the three verses. The story of her then future is told in three brief sentences: "I will execute judgments in No"—"I will cut off the multitude of No"—"And No shall be broken up." "I will execute judgments in No," seems to point to something more than an ordinary tale of siege and capture. Does the after-fate of Thebes stand out, then, as singular on the page of Egyptian history? The judgments were so marked and awful that historians have, unbidden, supplied the answer. Thebes sank beneath two of the most terrible blows ever dealt by the hand of man, and both fell after the prediction was uttered. The prophecies of Ezekiel were written in the time of Nebuchad-

* Dean Stanley.

nezzar: and, thirteen years after his dynasty was overthrown and Chaldea had passed into the hands of the Persians, Cambyses, during his invasion of Egypt (about 525 B.C.), captured Thebes, and poured out upon its devoted head the wrath of his insane ferocity. Its majestic temples were consumed with fire; and the power of the victorious host was bent to overthrow, or mar, its colossal statues. Although the city sprang up again, it never regained its ancient splendour. The hand of an irreversible judgment was laid also upon the sources of its wealth and greatness. It ceased to be Egypt's chief city. The capital was removed in turn to Memphis, Sais, and Alexandria. After the Greek conquest, the streams of commerce by which it had been fed were turned in other directions. "Commercial wealth, on the accession of the Ptolemies, began to flow in other channels. Coptos and Appollinopolis succeeded to the lucrative trade of Arabia, and Ethiopia no longer contributed to the revenues of Thebes."* Yet, notwithstanding its long decline, when the second stroke fell, in the beginning of the first century preceding the Christian era, Thebes was even then one of the wealthiest cities in the land. The blow was dealt by one of Egypt's own princes, Ptolemy Lathyrus, the grandfather of Cleopatra, about the year 89 B.C.; and the greatness that still remained to the ancient city can be measured by the fact that for three years it defied all the efforts of the besiegers. But the victor exacted a terrible vengeance. It was almost entirely levelled to the ground, and the words of the fourteenth and fifteenth verses found a complete fulfilment. God had executed judgments in No; its multitude was cut off, and has never returned.

It may seem that, in dealing with this prophecy, we are overstepping the limits we set ourselves when we promised to bring forward only such prophecies as

* Wilkinson.

have been fulfilled since the beginning of the Christian era; but, if in this instance we had had to go beyond our self-imposed boundary, the case is so clear and striking that it would have been difficult to have passed it over in silence. The third part of the prophecy, however, portraying as it does the after and permanent condition of the great city, falls most assuredly within our limits. "And No," the prophet continues, "shall be broken up." Too much stress, it might be thought, should not be laid upon the words; but the student of the fulfilled prophecies of Scripture learns that their words need no screen nor apology—that the very heart of the wonder lies in their complete and minute accomplishment. The prediction finds its interpretation in the event. No was literally broken up. Strabo visited the ruins about 25 B.C., and found the city, which only sixty years before still retained its majestic unity, divided into many separate villages. As Strabo found it, it has remained ever since; and the ruins are to-day portioned out between nine hamlets. Thebes was to endure, but only in fragments. How came the prophet to pen the words: "And No shall be broken up?" In summing up the destiny of Egypt's great and ancient capital, how did it happen that the finger was laid upon the very condition which it has maintained for twenty centuries?

The Old Testament contains so many distinct predictions regarding Egypt generally, that we may say they have written its history, and described the present position of the country and the condition of its people. Jeremiah foretells that, with the overthrow of Pharaoh by Nebuchadnezzar, a decline will set in which will deepen evermore, and for which no remedy shall be found. "Go up into Gilead," he says, "and take balm, O virgin daughter of Egypt: in vain dost thou use many medicines; there is no healing for thee" (Jer. xlvi. 11). We shall confine ourselves, however, to the prophecies concerning Egypt contained in the twenty-

ninth and thirtieth chapters of Ezekiel, and the nineteenth chapter of Isaiah. In Ezekiel xxix. the approaching conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar is foretold. The Egyptians are to be led away into captivity and the land is to be desolate for forty years. At the end of that time they are to return, but *their greatness is not to be restored.* In accordance with the words we have quoted from Jeremiah, Egypt will in vain seek healing for her wound. This

DOOM OF DECLINE

is repeated again and again. It shall not "any more lift itself up above the nations; and I will diminish them that they shall no more rule over the nations" (Ezek. xxix. 15); "her foundations shall be broken down. . . . The pride of her power shall come down" (xxx. 4, 6). This great country is, therefore, depicted as undergoing a gradual and total decay.

To be convinced that this prediction was not due to human foresight, we have only to remember what Egypt was at the beginning of the Christian era, and for ages after. Even then she seemed worthy of the fame which fixed the World's gaze upon her in admiring reverence. She had been the mother of science and letters and art. At the fire which burned upon her hearth, the nations had kindled the lamp of knowledge, which has burned on age after age, and which now flames so brightly. Her greatness was unique. It was more true and human than that of any other ancient land save Greece; and she had the unity, and repose, and calm majesty, which Greece lacked. She stood alone among the nations, great, wise, self-respecting; around her the choicest treasures of earth; her land filled with imperishable monuments of might and skill, and genius; her people, in their order and enlightenment and civilization, a marvel to all time. The foundation of her greatness was not her military power, but

the exhaustless wealth of her soil. That still remained; and, though she had felt the touch of decay, there was nothing in the time of our Lord to indicate that Egypt's day was past. It was within the range, not only of possibility, but of probability that she might yet again be mistress of her destiny, and that her old splendour might return. Her fertility won for her even then the title of "the granary of the world." Augustus, after the defeat of Antony, found so great wealth in Egypt that with it he paid all the arrears due to his army, and the debts which he had incurred to meet the expenses of the war. "It is said, too, that after all the spoliations the wealth and resources of Egypt appeared to him so formidable, that he was afraid to intrust that province to the charge of any man of rank or interest, lest he should raise up a rival to himself. He therefore committed the government of the country to Cornelius Gallus, a citizen of the equestrian order, and a person of very low extraction; he would not allow the city of Alexandria to possess any municipal council; and he declared all Egyptians incapable of being admitted into the Senate at Rome."* "Till the moment of the Arabian conquest," says Dr. Vincent, "Alexandria continued the second city in the (Roman) empire in rank, and the first, perhaps, in wealth, commerce, and prosperity."

Even in the seventh century of our era Egypt was still so powerful that the Mohammedan hosts, though flushed with victory, hesitated to attack it. The event showed that their caution was not uncalled for. Babylon of Egypt, on the ruins of which the town of Fostat was built, detained them seven months. The siege of Alexandria lasted fourteen months, and the Arabs lost before it twenty-three thousand men; and, after all, its capture was due to

* Dr. Arnold.

internal treachery, and not to the superior power of the assailants. The sight of its magnificence and wealth filled the children of the East with amazement. "'I have taken,' said Amrou to the caliph, 'the great city of the West. It is impossible for me to enumerate the variety of its riches and beauty, and I content myself with observing that it contains 4,000 palaces, 400 theatres or places of amusement, 12,000 shops for the sale of vegetable food, and 40,000 tributary Jews.'"* The destruction of the royal library, which was distributed among the baths of the city, and which supplied them with fuel for six months, has been regarded as one of the greatest of the world's calamities. Alexandria did not stand alone. Its condition was an indication of the riches and strength of the whole country. It would have been impossible for the Arabs to have conquered Egypt, or to have afterwards held it, had not the people, groaning under the oppression of their Greek masters, thrown themselves into the arms of the invaders.

So late, then, as the year 638, as far as human foresight is concerned, the fulfilment of this prediction could not have been foretold as even probable. What have the after-history of Egypt and its present condition to say regarding it? Have the last twelve and a half centuries proved or disproved the Scripture? Here is the answer:—

There has been, as was predicted, a constant decline. From the time of the Babylonian invasion there was no revival of Egypt's greatness and preeminence among the nations. Many medicines were tried, but she was not healed. In the Egypt of the Pharaohs, of the Persian dominion, of the Ptolemies, of the Roman Empire, of the Mohammedans, we have a gradual but continuous descent. After the

* Gibbon.

Arab conquest the degeneration proceeded with rapid strides, till Egypt has become what it is to-day. Its science, and learning, and art, no less than its magnificence, and power, and prestige, have wholly perished. Along that pathway of the past everything that made the Egyptians what they were has been wholly lost.

It was believed by many that a change for the better had set in under the present dynasty. The improvement was certainly not to be seen in hopelessly embarrassed finances, or in the character of the reigning class; and, what had a still more important bearing on the question of the prospects of Egypt, no improvement could be discerned in the mass of the people. A letter which appeared in *The Times* in the beginning of 1875, and gave to capitalists and others a needed note of warning, presented a view of the state of the country which no one who knew Egypt could dispute:—"No one, however, can say that, amid the material progress which has been made, any perceptible change in the feelings or condition of the great bulk of the people has been effected; and here, unfortunately, lies the element of instability in the new order of things. A little more Manchester calico is worn by the Arab population, a few more of the upper class of Arabs wear black cloth and French kid boots, and there is less repugnance among the pashas to champagne or claret; but in the essential features and characteristic habits of the people there is no real change or improvement whatever. . . Such a thorough change in the external features of any nation in so short a time has probably never been witnessed. But it is much more remarkable, it is almost pathetic, when it is remembered that the great mass of the people are utterly rude and unlettered, and only very slightly removed from barbarism. It is here, indeed, that the unstable foundation upon which the Khedive has built his splendid superstructure discovers

its weakness."* Every friend of humanity would rejoice had the degradation of Egypt reached its limit, and had the dawn of a brighter day risen upon it. But the advance was not the offspring of awakening life and prosperity among the people; it was solely due to the late Khedive's aspirations, and strenuous, but individual, efforts. The improvement did not penetrate to the people, and the only result for them was the increased pressure of their burdens.

The British occupation, which began in 1882, has undoubtedly brought a large measure of relief. The following, originally contributed to *The New York Nation* by its correspondent, Mr. Woodruff, in 1892, is a testimony of which Great Britain may well be proud: "The reforms which England has wrought in Egypt during the past nine years are simply astounding. A looted treasury, a disorganised and almost hopelessly corrupt administration, a rebellious and cowardly army, and a people crushed with unbearable taxation, have in this short space of time, and in the face of Oriental apathy and French obstruction, been metamorphosed into order, plenty, and content."† But while all this is true, it would be a mistake to conclude that Egypt's trouble was ended and that those predictions ceased to find fulfilment. These reforms are in no sense of native growth. They are imposed by external pressure, and when the pressure is withdrawn they will disappear. And even now the burdens are huge. In 1903 the funded debt of Egypt amounted to 103 millions sterling. The annual interest and other charges on that sum, with the payment of a standing army, and of an extensive civil administration, have all to be met by taxation imposed upon a people struggling with poverty. It is equally true also that the British occupation has produced no regeneration of the people nor the faintest promise of returning greatness.

* James Shaw.

† W. Fraser Rae, *Egypt To-day*, pp. 131-132.

This second point, then, in the prophetic picture of Egypt has been strikingly fulfilled. There has been "no healing" for Egypt. "The pride of her power" has "come down." She has been diminished and has no more ruled over the nations. We now turn to a third feature. Though there is to be decline, the Scripture assures us there will be

NO EXTINCTION

either of the people or of the kingdom. "They," we read, "shall be there (that is, in their own land) a base kingdom" (Ezek. xxix. 14). Had this deepening decay been foreseen by the wise, had it been accepted as certain that Egypt should pass down step by step from prosperity and greatness, the prediction would inevitably have been ventured that at some point of that career of degradation her existence as a nation, or at least as a separate dominion, should cease. This must have seemed the surest of all possible deductions. The national extinction of the Egyptians is an event which in itself would have occasioned little surprise. On the contrary, it was to be expected that Egypt should share the general fate of Eastern greatness. The nations, the waves on this great unresting sea of human life, have their rise and fall. They come towering on in swelling strength and pride toward that strong barrier which a Divine hand has set; but they are only hurrying on to the moment when, brought utterly low and broken, they will be lost in the great ocean whence they sprang. A people cannot continue at the summit of power for ever. And when their supremacy is overthrown, they are gradually merged in the conquering race, and lost among them; and their territory, becoming a province of a wider empire, loses, so far as nature will permit, its special character, and its old traditional boundaries.

It seemed highly improbable, therefore, altogether

apart from the prediction regarding its decline, that the national existence of Egypt should continue. But, with the full assurance that this prediction should be fulfilled, its continuance must have seemed, to human reason, an utter impossibility. And yet to this paradox the Scripture from of old pledged itself. Egypt should be brought low; it should be set among the basest; and nevertheless it should be preserved. "It shall be there a base kingdom." And, as the Scripture has said, so has it been. Down through every age, even to our own times, the name of Egypt has lived on men's lips. The "kingdom" still exists, possessing its distinctive character and its ancient boundaries. Its ruler bears the title to-day of "Khediv-el-Misr," King of Egypt, while by the Egyptians he is spoken of as the *Effendina,* "the Great Lord." Its people have continued, though for two thousand years they have ceased to be lords of the soil. Fierce persecutions and ceaseless grinding oppression have neither driven them from their fatherland, nor extinguished them as a separate race among their masters. The *fellahin* (the cultivators of the soil) form more than four-fifths of the entire population of Egypt; and according to the estimate of a recent writer,* two-thirds of these may be set down as descendants of the ancient Egyptians who embraced Mohammedanism at the time of the Arab conquest, or who have since apostatized. In addition to these there are the Copts, who, along with their Christianity, retain the proud conviction that they are the lineal descendants of Egypt's ancient masters. Their number is variously stated, Lane giving it as 150,000, and M'Coan as 500,000. The estimates of both writers agree, however, in representing them as about one-twelfth of the whole population.

People and kingdom, therefore, alike continue. Through all her many changes Egypt has preserved

* M'Coan, *Egypt as It Is,* p. 23.

her identity. Downtrodden and oppressed, she has never ceased to hold some place in the commonwealth of nations, small though, in these latter days, that place has been. If to have foreseen the long and steady decay, of which the records of Egypt are the prolonged story, was marvellous, then, in the face of this, to have predicted its preservation was still more astounding.

Let us now examine two other parts of the prophetic forecast. The greatest emphasis is laid upon the then future

DEGRADATION OF EGYPT:

"They shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations; for I will diminish them that they shall no more rule over the nations." Confronted as men then were, and were still to be for long ages after the Christian era had begun, by the fame, and the wisdom, and the strength, of Egypt, this must have been one of the most astounding features in the whole of the prophetic vision.

It is striking to mark how this astonishment is re-echoed by the on-lookers of modern times. "It is melancholy," says Lane, "to compare the present state of Egypt with its ancient prosperity, when the variety, elegance, and exquisite finish displayed in its manufactures attracted the admiration of surrounding nations, and its inhabitants were in no need of foreign commerce to increase their wealth or to add to their comforts. Antiquarian researches show us that not only the Pharaohs and the priests and military chiefs, but also a great proportion of the agriculturists, even in the age of Moses and at a yet earlier period, passed a life of the most refined luxury, were clad in linen of the most delicate fabric, and reclined on couches and chairs which have served as models for the furniture of our modern saloons. Nature is as lavish as she was of old to the inhabitants of the valley of the Nile; but

for many centuries they have ceased to enjoy the benefit of a steady government. Each of their successive rulers during this long lapse of time, considering the uncertain tenure of his power, has been almost wholly intent upon increasing his own wealth; and thus a large portion of the nation has gradually perished, and the remnant, in general, has been reduced to a state of the most afflicting poverty."*

The splendour and luxury of ancient Egypt were proverbial, and the monuments prove that refinement and luxury extended, as Lane has said, even to the cultivators. But where the children of Mizraim were once clothed in fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, they now know nakedness and want. The fathers called forth the world's admiration, and the children now awaken, in almost as great a degree, its pity and contempt. Every thing that made Egypt what it was has perished. Its once endless wealth has long ago disappeared. Its arm of power is withered. Its industries, which were its glory, have become a shame and a reproach. "When Bonaparte's *savants* entered Cairo they found its handicrafts, as its learning, at the lowest ebb of decadence." "With a few exceptions, these are still as backward as they were a hundred years ago." Mehemet Ali made an attempt to revive them, and "costly failure" was the only result. M'Coan finds a main cause of this in "the low level of material civilization among nine-tenths of the population." †

There is as little promise in its commerce as in its manufactures. Its trade received a fatal blow when the discovery was made of an ocean passage to India by the Cape; and it has sustained another stroke in that great triumph of modern engineering which has given to Egypt nearly the whole of its present importance. The Suez Canal "represents a distinct and more or less permanent loss. Not only has it cost the

* *Modern Egyptians,* Vol. II., p. 1. † *Egypt as It Is.*

treasury in all more than £17,000,000 in money outlay, but it has diverted from the Egyptian ports and railways a large and increasing transit traffic of great revenue value." *

To some extent the fruitfulness of Egypt remains, it is true; but a fertile soil will not in itself make a people great, and from this people all the elements of national greatness seem to have passed away. Polybius, in giving an account of the various nationalities represented in Alexandria, speaks of the Egyptians as a keen and civilized race. To measure the depth to which they have fallen we have only to set against this the words of Niebuhr: "If an ancient origin and illustrious ancestors could confer merit, the Copts would be a highly estimable people. They are descended from the ancient Egyptians; and the Turks on this account call them in derision 'the posterity of Pharaoh.' But their uncouth figure, ignorance, and wretchedness do little credit to the sovereigns of ancient Egypt." The hopeless bondage of centuries has quenched every spark of ambition in the breasts of the descendants of the Pharaohs; and, under the iron heel of oppression, genius and talent, and even intellect itself, seem to have been extinguished. The race, still physically sound, is mentally effete. The Egyptians are now, what for long ages they were held to be, a race of slaves.

And it is not on the people only that this doom has pressed. The fulfilment of the decree, "They shall be there a base kingdom," can be read beneath the glitter of the throne itself. The schemes and improvements of Ismail Pasha have resulted, as is well-known, in hopeless bankruptcy. Sir George Campbell says: "The debt incurred by usurious interest had well-nigh swamped the state. It continually increased, and finally the Khedive placed himself in distinguished European hands. He put his income in trust, as it were, for the

* *Ibid.*

benefit of his creditors, and it has been so administered under European control for the last year. Let us see the result. . . . The Khedive was to be put on an allowance, as he expressed it at the time; £4,500,000 being allowed for the expenses of the administration, and the rest applied for the benefit of the creditors. . . . By dint of whipping and spurring and getting all that it was possible to get by any means, the engagements to the creditors for the first two half-years—that is, those due in the beginning and middle of 1877—have been satisfied; but that part of the engagement which affected the Egyptian administration and people has not been carried out. The allowances stipulated to carry on the government have not been paid; and, *from the Khedive downwards, all the officials have been kept out of their salaries,* till the thing has become past endurance." Has Egypt ever presented a more humiliating spectacle?

But worse remains behind. Few things show the weakness of the government more than the existence of the mixed courts forced upon the viceroy, and which exercise uncontrolled authority over the whole country in every case in which a foreigner is concerned. "The Khedive and all his government officers and belongings have been made subject to the new courts, and a very large proportion of their larger business—in fact, it seemed to me the main staple of it—is hearing cases and passing decrees against the Khedive. . . . I hardly see how a government of this kind can be carried on in such subjection to courts in which the foreign element is wholly and absolutely dominant, which have claimed to decide on the illegality of the formal decrees of the ruling power, and which are under no control whatever."* "The English Consul," says Miss Amelia B. Edwards, "came to breakfast with us by invitation. He told us of some of the incon-

* *An Inside View of Egypt.*

veniences of the international muddle which is made up of consular tribunals, international tribunals, capitulations, *et hoc genus omne*, and which has gone far to render government almost impossible in Egypt. The laws of naturalization there are such that Turkish subjects, and even native Egyptians, can now obtain the privileges of foreigners, and evade the jurisdiction of the Egyptian Government; and Italians, Greeks, and Levantines may outrage the criminal and civil laws of the country they are residing in almost with impunity." *

With all the enterprise and éclat of the reign of Ismail Pasha, the degradation of Egypt was perhaps never so evident before. "While we hear much of the higher titles, higher prerogatives, and more independent position of the Khedive of these days, it is curious to look back a little into history and see how far there has been a practical decadence. Ever since independent Mohammedan Egypt submitted to the Turks, *it has never been so dependent as it is now.* Till the beginning of the present century it was a suzerainty, and nothing more, that it acknowledged. Then came Mehemet Ali, not really appointed by the Porte, but rising to power by his own energy. It need not be recited how, during his long reign, he and his son Ibrahim set the Porte at defiance, and foreign powers as well. Now all that has changed. The ruler of Egypt has been obliged to surrender his fleet, and in all things to submit to the corruption of the Constantinople offices. He feels himself so weak in the presence of foreign powers, and foreign financial corporations, that he yields many things that he knows he ought not to yield, all to the detriment of his country."† The events which have transpired since those words were written, have only more fully revealed the misery of Egypt. She is still preserved, but she is there "a base

* *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile,* pp. 64, 65. † *Ibid.*

kingdom;" she is "the basest of the kingdoms." As Egypt mingles in the politics of the present time, the question is not, What will she do? but, What will be done with her? I have already spoken of the effects of the British occupation, but it has been able to achieve its reforms only through deeper abasement of the Egyptian sovereignty. We have had to assume the entire control of the Egyptian finances. The Khedive cannot impose or receive a single tax. He, his ministers, and the entire body of the officials of Egypt, receive their salaries from the representative of the British government. Some time ago the Khedive, not unnaturally restive under such iron control, dismissed his prime minister and replaced him by one less subservient to the British government. The Khedive was immediately informed by Lord Cromer that the new minister must be dismissed and the old minister reinstated within four and twenty hours. The Khedive obeyed. "According to the official Directory," says Mr. Curtis, "Lord Cromer is merely Consul-General and diplomatic agent of Great Britain at Cairo, but the Khedive is allowed to do nothing without his consent or approval. In the official lists he ranks with the Consul-General of the United States and other countries, and on ceremonial occasions he appears with his colleagues of the Consular corps and makes his bow to the man on the throne. And the man on the throne returns the salute of his master, and is conscious that the quiet-looking gentleman with unostentatious manners and a pleasant smile controls his thoughts as well as his acts, for it is a waste of time for His Highness to suggest or plan or even imagine things that Lord Cromer does not approve."*

In the face of these things need we ask whose word this is which said from of old—"THEY SHALL BE THERE A BASE KINGDOM. . . . FOR I WILL DIMINISH THEM?"

* *Egypt, Burmah and British Malaysia* (1905), p. 64.

The last point in the prediction to which we now draw attention is that, though the kingdom was to continue, there should be

NO NATIVE PRINCE

of Egypt. "There shall be no more a prince out of the land of Egypt" (Ezek. xxx. 13). On this a few words will suffice. The prophecy has been completely and literally fulfilled. It is evident that the words did not mean that Egypt should be without a government. The "kingdom" was to continue. She was to have possessors and masters, but these were not to arise from among her own children. There was to be no longer a *native* ruler; but the land, with all that was its glory and its strength, was to be made waste under the disastrous dominion of those who were bound to the people by no ties of kindred or of country. In 525 B. C. Egypt was conquered by the Persians under Cambyses, and its king, Psammetik III., was made prisoner. The country became a province of the Persian empire; but, unlike their degenerate offspring, the Egyptians of that period did not tamely bow under the foreign yoke. For the next one hundred and seventy years their history is simply a tale of rebellions, more or less temporarily successful, until they were finally subdued by Ochus in 350 B. C. From that time to the present no native prince has ruled the land. Again and again has Egypt changed masters, but among them all no son of hers is numbered. There has been "no more a prince out of the land of Egypt."

Put together these five things: (1) the picture of the final condition of Thebes, Egypt's ancient capital; (2) that the greatness of Egypt should not return, but that, on the contrary, it should sink into deepening decay; (3) that, notwithstanding decay, it should still have its sovereign and continue a

kingdom; but (4) that it should exist in deep humiliation and be the basest of the kingdoms; and (5) that, though the throne should continue, it should never be filled by one of Egypt's own sons. Place these predictions in the light of Egypt's present condition and past history, and what do they tell us? Surely, not merely that this is God's Book. That they do say; for these words were never man's, but "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But they tell also that God is Judge, that He will rebuke pride, and punish sin. The Lord ruleth, and forgets neither His threatenings nor His promises.

CHAPTER V.

EGYPT (*Continued*).

I again ask attention to this land of fame and mystery, and it may be well to say in one word why I do so. In order to leave no room for the suspicion that the predictions were written after the event, we have agreed not to press for a verdict from any fulfilment which took place before the beginning of the Christian era. But, if we are to succeed in banishing every suspicion, we must do something more. I can understand someone saying—not from any desire to oppose, but from a hesitancy which is in the circumstances perfectly natural—"Yes, the fulfilment you speak of is indeed marvellous. But quite as marvellous things have sometimes been brought about by chance, and it is perhaps no more than we might expect that, out of so many hundreds of predictions, some should come true." But the Scriptures enable us to meet this difficulty as easily as the other. They contain what I may call prophetic pictures. They do not merely indicate one feature among the many after-characteristics of peoples and of countries: they describe one feature after another till their condition is fully portrayed. With the fulfilment of one, or perhaps two, of these it might be imagined that chance had had to do, but, as one after another is added, the suspicion becomes more and more unreasonable, till, before the accumulating evidence, it is swept away completely and for ever.

Such a picture we have in the prophecies concerning Egypt. We have already marked the fulfilment of

FIVE PREDICTIONS.

Let me now ask the reader to look with me at the fulfilment of

TEN OTHERS.

1. We began the previous chapter with a prediction concerning Thebes, the most ancient capital city of Egypt. Another famous city, which, as capital, took in time the place of Thebes, is mentioned in Ezekiel xxx. 13: "Thus saith the Lord God: I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause the images to cease from Noph." This name preserves the designation Pa-Nouf by which the Egyptians named the ancient city known to us as

MEMPHIS.

It is said to have been founded by Menes, and that there the first regulations were made for the worship of the gods and the service of the temples. It is certain that it was regarded with the deepest veneration. The monuments enumerate its gods and its temples, and Brugsch Bey speaks of it in his book, *Egypt Under the Pharaohs*, as "the great temple-city of Egypt."

It was not unfitting, therefore, that He who was to judge Egypt for its idolatry, as well as for its sin, should say of Memphis that He would destroy its idols and cause the images to cease from it. But, though it might prove a fitting judgment, it was a most unlikely fate. The idols have not been destroyed elsewhere nor have the images ceased. Both are found to-day in Thebes, which was in ruins when Memphis still retained its splendour. They are found elsewhere, and, from what we know of the general condition of Egypt, we should say it was highly probable they would be found here also.

To those who looked upon Memphis at the beginning of the Christian era this fate must have seemed more improbable still. Strabo found the city "large and populous, next to Alexandria in size," and speaks of its gods and temples and statues. In the beginning of the seventh century it was the residence of the Governor of Egypt, who made terms there with the Arab invaders. The city of Cairo having been founded in the neighbourhood, the population drifted away from the old city, and its materials were taken to build and extend the new. The vast mass of Memphis, however, seemed to defy all attempts at destruction. Abd-ul-Latif, an Arab traveller, who visited it in the 13th century, says: "its ruins still offer to the eyes of the spectator a collection of wonderful works which confound the intellect, and to describe which the most eloquent man would labour in vain. The longer we look upon the scene, the higher rises the admiration it inspires; and every new glance that we cast upon the ruins reveals a new charm. Scarcely have they awakened a distinct idea in the soul of the spectator, than a still more admirable idea suggests itself; and just as you believe you have gained complete knowledge of them, at that very moment the conviction forces itself on the mind, that what you think you know is still very far from the truth."

And now what of to-day? So completely has the doom been accomplished that a century ago the very site of Memphis was a matter of dispute. Later investigations have settled that question, but they have also verified the truth of the prediction. With the exception of one colossal statue (the property of the English nation, but which has never been removed, and which Wilkinson says, will some day be burned by the Arabs for lime), and a small figure of red granite, both of extraordinary beauty, but broken and laid on the ground—with the exception of these, the idols and the images and the temples—the city and all

it contained have passed away. Wilkinson writes: "there is very little else worthy of remark amidst the mounds of Memphis." "We are surprised to find so few remains of this vast city." Brugsch Bey says: "All that remains of this celebrated city at the present time consists of heaps of fragments of columns and altars, and carvings which once belonged to the temples of Memphis—a far-stretching mass of mounds, out of which shine in the clear sunlight the remains of the half-destroyed chambers and halls of ancient houses. Those travellers who visit the remains of Memphis in the hope of recognising some vestiges worthy of its fame, will be little satisfied with the sad prospect which meets the eye." Miss Amelia B. Edwards thus describes a visit to Memphis: "We are all gathered round the brink of a muddy pool in the midst of which lies a shapeless block of blackened and corroded limestone. This, it seems, is the famous prostrate colossus of Rameses the Great. . . . . So here it lies, face downwards and drowned once a year by the Nile; visible only when the pools left by the inundation have evaporated and all the muddy hollows are dried up. . . . .

"Where, however, is the companion colossus? Where is the Temple itself? Where are the pylons of the obelisks, of the avenues of sphinxes? Where, in short, is Memphis?

"The dragoman shrugs his shoulders and points to the barren mounds among the palms. . . . And is this all? No—not quite all. There are some mud huts yonder, in among the trees; and in front of one of these we find a number of sculptured fragments—battered sphinxes, torsos without legs, sitting figures without heads—in green, black, and red granite. Ranged in an irregular semicircle on the sward, they seem to sit in forlorn conclave, half solemn, half ludicrous, with the goats browsing round, and the little Arab children hiding behind them.

"Near this, in another pool, lies another colossus—not the fellow to that which we saw first; but a smaller one—also face downwards, of red granite.

"And this is all that remains of Memphis, eldest of cities; a few large rubbish-heaps, a dozen or so of broken statues, and a name! . . . Where are those stately ruins that even in the middle ages extended over a space estimated at 'half a day's journey in every direction?' One can hardly believe that a great city ever flourished on this spot, or understand how it should have been effaced so utterly."*

2. We turn once more to the general aspect and fortunes of the entire country. The hand of decay was also to be placed upon

THE RIVERS AND THE CANALS.

We read: "I will make the rivers dry" (Ezek. xxx. 12); and again, "The waters shall fail from the sea and the river shall be wasted and become dry. And the rivers shall stink: the streams (or canals) of Egypt shall be minished and dried up" (Isaiah xix. 5, 6). By "the sea" is in all probability meant the Nile. It was named *oceanos* by Homer, and has been called the sea, or the sea of the Nile, by both ancient and modern Egyptians. "The rivers" which were to "become dry" and to "stink" were the arms of the Nile which, passing through the plain of the Delta, poured the waters of this gigantic stream into the Mediterranean. Part of this prediction is as yet unfulfilled. The waters have not as yet failed from the sea, but nevertheless we trace even here fulfilments as wonderful as those which startle us in other parts of the prophetic description. The hand of decay has made a deepening impress on the rivers and the canals of Egypt. In his article on the Nile in Smith's Bible Dictionary, Mr. Reginald

* *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile*, pp. 97-99.

Stuart Poole says: "The great difference between the Nile of Egypt in the present day and in ancient times is caused by the failure of some of its branches. . . . The river was famous for its seven branches, and under the Roman dominion eleven were counted, of which, however, there were but seven principal ones. Herodotus notices that there were seven, of which he says that two, the present Damietta and Rosetta branches, were originally artificial, and he therefore speaks of 'the five mouths.' *Now, as for a long period past, there are no navigable and unobstructed branches but these two that Herodotus distinguishes as the work of man.*" Even these are accessible only to small vessels. "The five other ancient mouths of the river have long ago silted up, and their course can now be hardly traced over the great alluvial plain and through the network of canals and lakes which interpose between the sea and this point."*

The rivers then have been made dry, and instead of flowing in their ancient course have become stinking pools and marshes. What had formerly ministered to health and pleasure was changed into a danger and an offence. For there can be no doubt that what is shown here in the vivid picture of prophecy was a condition through which they actually passed. Referring to one of the canals of Cairo, Wilkinson says that to close it, and turn its bed into a street would have the "advantage of freeing the houses on its banks from the noxious vapours that rise when the water has retired and left a bed of liquid mud." What now of the canals? Amrou, the Mahommedan conqueror of Egypt, wrote to the caliph that it was necessary that one-third of the entire revenues of the country should be devoted to the maintenance of the canals. This has never been done, and the result has been that the canals also have been "minished and dried up." The predecessors of

* *Egypt as It Is*, p. 5.

the present dynasty seem to have specially sinned in this respect. "The Mameluke Beys," says Malte Brun, "applied to their own private use the funds destined to the support of these public works, on which the fertility of Egypt depends. Many canals were even abandoned by these barbarians, who thus destroyed the sources of their own revenues." Mehemet Ali and Ismail Pasha have undoubtedly tried to atone for the neglect of the past. The resources of the country and the lives of her children have been lavished in the attempt to undo the mischief which has resulted from former negligence. But their efforts have been only partially successful. The Menoufieh Canal, for example, used formerly to communicate with the Rosetta branch of the Nile, but is now dammed up. Mr. Villiers Stuart, who was deputed to examine and report upon the state of Egypt in 1882 says: "One complaint often made to me on the subject of irrigation in the Delta, is that the canals run dry at the critical season of the year, and when the quantity and quality of the cotton crop are most seriously affected by any deficiency in the water supply."*

Of the Saïd, or Upper Egypt, he writes: If "there were a canal system as perfect as in the Delta, it would far exceed it in richness of vegetation and in wealth-producing power."† As it is at present it depends for its one crop on the annual overflow of the Nile. Were a system of canal-irrigation introduced "it could grow three crops where it now grows but one." But is this a modern discovery? Did the wise Egyptians live for centuries in the country without suspecting that there was so easy a method of multiplying its fertility? No, this part of the country now condemned to comparative barrenness and poverty for the lack of irrigation, was once covered with canals. The following extracts explain how the change has come about: "Canals exist,

* *Egypt After the War,* p. 51. † *Ibid.* p. 241.

but many have been allowed to silt up. They all want deepening, and they ought to be connected together on a scientific system."* "The shallownesss of the canals is partly due to the fact that the late Khedive diverted to his sugar estates and to other purposes the forced labour that ought to have been applied to keep them clean."† "There seems no doubt that the ancient Egyptians kept the canals in Upper Egypt full; this accounts for the much larger population in the time of the Pharaohs."‡ "We could irrigate our land much better," the peasants said to him, "and more of it, if the canals had water in them, but they are dry; if they were deepened, there would be water in them always."§ The canals, as the Scripture predicted, have been minished and dried up.

3. Another feature is

THE RIVER SCENERY

of Egypt as presented in the prophetic picture indicated a further remarkable change. Mr. Reginald Stuart Poole, formerly of the British Museum, writes: "The monuments and the narratives of ancient writers show us in the Nile of Egypt in old times, a stream bordered by flags and reeds, the covert of abundant wild-fowl, and bearing on its waters the fragrant flowers of the various-coloured lotus. Now in Egypt scarcely any reeds or water-plants—the famous papyrus being nearly if not quite extinct, and the lotus almost unknown—are to be seen except in the marshes near the Mediterranean. This also was prophesied by Isaiah: 'The papyrus-reeds in the river and everything growing (lit 'sown') in the river shall be dried up, driven away (by the wind) and (shall) not be' (xix. 7). When it is recollected that the water-plants of Egypt were so abundant as to be a great source of revenue in the

* *Ibid.* p. 241. † P. 243. ‡ P. 261. § P. 277.

prophet's time and much later, the exact fulfilment of his predictions is a valuable evidence of the truth of the old opinion as to 'the sure word of prophecy.' "

This was indeed no small part of the burden of loss and decay which was to lay the pride of Egypt in the dust. An inscription speaks of an Egyptian Queen as having reigned over the land of the papyrus and the lotus. These plants formed so striking a feature of Upper and Lower Egypt respectively that they became the symbols of the districts. They were also a boon to the people and a source of considerable revenue to the crown. "The lotus, the papyrus, and other similar productions of the land, during and after the inundation, were, for the poor, one of the greatest blessings nature ever provided for any people."* They were largely used as food. The lotus flowers were in constant demand for the bouquets and garlands which the Egyptian host presented to and with which he adorned his guests. The seeds were pounded and made into bread. The papyrus was put to many uses. "They employ the roots," Pliny writes, "as firewood, and for making various utensils. They even construct small boats of the plant; and out of the rind sails, mats, clothes, bedding, and ropes." But that which made it famous, and which has preserved the name to our own time, was the use made of it as a writing material. Pliny, who wrote in the latter half of the first century of our era, describes the appearance and the growth of the plant and the various kinds of paper which were formed from it. We know that papyrus was in use till the seventh century, and until that time the plant was still found in its ancient home. But then as now it stood written: "The reeds and the flags shall wither away. The meadow ("here used," says Gesenius, "of the grassy places on the banks of the Nile") by the Nile, by the brink of the Nile, and all that is sown by

* Wilkinson. *Ancient Egyptians*, I., p. 168.

the Nile shall become dry, be driven away, and be no more" (Isaiah xix. 6, 7). And to-day all is fulfilled. "The plant is now unknown in Egypt."* The pink and the blue lotus, which appear so frequently in the paintings, have also passed away. The traveller is struck by the absence of verdure on the Nile banks. "It is a curious fact that no water-plants or weeds grow on the banks of the Nile; a sedgy margin is never to be met with in this country."†

4. A similar prediction is made regarding

THE FISHERIES.

"Herodotus says that a certain number of the poorer Egyptians 'lived almost entirely on fish.' It was so abundant that it was necessarily cheap. The Nile produced several kinds which were easily caught; and in Lake Moeris the abundance of fish was such that the Pharaohs are said to have derived from the sale a revenue of above £94,000 a year. . . . The fishermen of Egypt formed a numerous class, and the salting and drying of fish furnished occupation to a large number of persons."‡ Diodorous refers to the fisheries of Egypt in similar terms, showing that the industry within fifty years of the beginning of the Christian era had suffered no diminution. Fish constituted even then a large portion of the daily food of the people, and dried fish formed a large item in Egyptian exports. But it stood written: "The fishers also shall lament, and all they that cast angle into the Nile shall mourn, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish" (Isaiah xix. 8). And this too has been accomplished. In the decline of Egypt the fish-pools and their conduits were neglected and ruined, and the fishers lamented, mourned, and languished. "Having once been very productive, and a main source

* *Ibid.* II., p. 97. † Irby and Mangles.

‡ Rawlinson's *Egypt and Babylon,* pp. 318, 319.

of revenue as well as of sustenance, the fisheries are now scarcely of any moment, excepting about Lake Menzaleh, and in some few places elsewhere, chiefly in the North of Egypt."*

But

5. THE REMAINING INDUSTRIES

of Egypt were also to suffer. The prophet continues: "Moreover they that work in combed flax, and they that weave white cloth shall be ashamed. And her pillars shall be broken in pieces, and all they that work for hire shall be grieved in soul. . . . Neither shall there be for Egypt any work which head or tail, palm branch or rush, may do" (xix. 9, 10, 15). "The pillars" are the support of the social fabric, the rich and noble by whose patronage the industries of the country were encouraged. "Head" and "tail" are expressive figures of those who lead and those who follow, as are the lofty palm-branch and the humble rush of high and low, the aristocracy and the masses of the people. It is implied that these are bound together in a fellowship of labour, and we are told that a day was to come when their occupation should be gone and the fellowship should cease.

That the hand is laid here upon what formed a special feature of Egyptian life we shall immediately see. But to understand how heavy this doom was, and the improbability of its fulfilment, we have to recall the fact that the greatness of Egypt lay not so much in her military power, as in her civilization. Her arts and her industries were her chief glories. Before showing that their lustre is undimmed by modern achievements I may say that they were well and long sustained by "the pillars." "Considerable sums were expended in furnishing houses, and in many artificial caprices. Rich jewels and costly works of art were in great request,

* Reginald Stuart Poole.

as well among the inhabitants of the provincial capitals, as at Thebes and Memphis: they delighted in splendid equipages, elegant and commodious boats, numerous attendants, horses, dogs, and other requisites for the chase; and besides, their houses, their villas, and their gardens were laid out with no ordinary expense."* "The rich frequently had ornamental works, statues, and furniture of solid gold."† Expense was lavished upon them even to the tomb. The embalming of a corpse sometimes cost, according to Diodorous, £250 sterling.

That the Palm-branch and the Rush, the higher and the lower classes, alike shared in the vast and continuous labours which were characteristic of Egyptian civilization has been abundantly proved by the monuments. The priests, who were bound by an exacting ritual, held the first position in the state; they were also charged with the administration of the law. The chief architects were princes, and were permitted to intermarry with the royal family. The military force consisted of 410,000 men, exclusive of the large force of mercenaries, and the commands were held by the nobility. These last occupied posts also in the royal household, in the government of the country, in the management of the royal estates, and, notwithstanding that a shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians, even the office of superintendent of the herds was filled by men of rank.

This union of classes is an indication of the place which art and industry held in the public estimation. Excellence was their constant aim, we may say their passion; and the utmost care was taken to secure the highest efficiency in every department. "No tradesman," says Diodorous, "was permitted to meddle in political affairs, or to hold any civil office in the state,

* Wilkinson. *The Ancient Egyptians*, II., pp. 218-219.

† *Ibid.*, p. 167.

lest his thoughts should be distracted by the inconsistency of his pursuits. . . . They feared that without such a law . . . their proper occupations would be neglected. . . . They also considered that to follow more than one occupation would be detrimental to their own interests and to those of the community; and that, when men, from a motive of avarice, are induced to engage in numerous branches of art, the result generally is that they are unable to excel in any."

The results of this care have secured for Egypt its undying fame. The byssus, woven in the looms of those who worked "in combed flax," was sold for its weight in gold; and Pliny, accounting for the large quantity of flax cultivated in Egypt explains that the Egyptians exported linen to Arabia and India, and adds that the quality of that produced by Egyptian looms was far superior to any other. "Nor was the praise bestowed upon that manufacture unmerited; and the quality of one piece of linen found near Memphis fully justifies it, and excites equal admiration at the present day, being to the touch comparable to silk, and not inferior in texture to our finest cambric. . . Some idea may be given of its texture from the number of threads in the inch, which is 540 (270 double threads) in the warp," and 110 in the woof. "It is covered with small figures and hieroglyphics, so finely drawn that here and there the lines are with difficulty followed by the eye. . . . The perfection of its threads is equally surprising; the knots and breaks, seen in our best cambric, are not found in holding it to the light."*

Their superiority was as marked in spinning as in weaving. The threads employed, for example, in the manufacture of nets astonished the ancients by their fineness and strength. Some of the nets, Pliny says,

* *Ibid.*, pp. 75-80.

"were so delicate that they would pass through a man's ring, and a single person could carry a sufficient number of them to surround a whole wood. Julius Lupus, who died while Governor of Egypt, had some of these nets, each string of which consisted of 150 threads; a fact perfectly surprising to those who are not aware that the Rhodians preserve to this day in the temple of Minerva a linen corslet presented to them by Amasis, King of Egypt, whose threads are composed each of 365 fibres." Herodotus mentions another presented by the same king to the Lacedæmonians. "It was of linen," he says, "ornamented with numerous figures of animals worked in gold and cotton. Each thread of the corslet was worthy of admiration. For, though very fine, every one was composed of 360 other threads, all distinct."

The "combing" of the flax was a marked feature in the manufacture. The cloth was subjected to a process of smoothing, or calendering. They also anticipated the moderns in the use of dyes. "Another very remarkable discovery of the Egyptians was the use of mordants. They were acquainted with the effect of acids on colour, and submitted the cloth they dyed to one of the same processes adopted in our modern manufactories; and while, from his account, we perceive how little Pliny understood the process he was describing, he at the same time gives us the strongest evidence of its truth. 'In Egypt,' he says, 'they stain clothes in a wonderful manner. They take them in their original state, quite white, and imbue them, not with a dye, but with certain drugs which have the power of absorbing and taking colour. When this is done there is still no appearance of change in the cloths; but so soon as they are dipped into a bath of the pigment, which has been prepared for the purpose, they are taken out properly coloured. The singular thing is, that though the bath contains only one colour,

several hues are imparted to the piece . . . nor can the colour be afterward washed off."*

This is not the only indication presented by their manufactures that they were acquainted with the secrets of modern science. "That the Egyptians possessed considerable knowledge of chemistry and the use of metallic-oxides, is evident from the nature of the colours applied to their glass and porcelain."† Glass cutting was supposed to have been first invented in the 17th century by Lehmann at Prague. "But the specimens of ancient glass, cut, engraved, and ground, discovered in Egypt suffice to prove it was practised there of old. . . . Emery powder and the lapidary's wheel were also used in Egypt."‡

The manufacture of glass itself has also been regarded as an invention of modern times. "They were well acquainted," says Wilkinson, to whose great work I mainly confine myself for testimony as to the character of Egyptian industries, "not only with the manufacture of common glass for beads and bottles of ordinary quality, but with the art of staining it of divers colours. . . . And so skilful were they in this complicated process, that they imitated the most fanciful devices, and succeeded in counterfeiting the rich hues and brilliancy of precious stones. The green emerald, the purple amethyst, and other expensive gems were successfully imitated. . . . Some mock pearls (found by me at Thebes) have been so well counterfeited that even now it is difficult with a strong lens to detect the imposition."§ Winckelmann speaks of two pieces of glass mosaic which show the perfection attained by the workers in glass. One of the pieces, "though not quite an inch in length, and a third of an inch in breadth exhibits, on a dark and variegated ground, a bird resembling a duck in very bright and

* *Ibid.* II., p. 83. † *Ibid.* II., p. 66. ‡ *Ibid.* II., p. 67.
§ *Ibid.* II., p. 64.

varied colours. . . . The outlines are bold and decided, the colours beautiful and pure, and the effect very pleasing; in consequence of the artist having alternately introduced an opaque and a transparent glass. The most delicate pencil of a miniature painter could not have traced with greater sharpness the circle of the eyeball, or the plumage of the neck and wings, at which part this specimen has been broken. But the most surprising thing is that the reverse exhibits the same bird, in which it is impossible to discover any difference in the smallest details; whence it may be concluded that the figure of the bird continues through its thickness."

Nor was glass merely used for ornamental purposes. Vases and bottles were manufactured, the latter being sometimes protected by wickerwork or encased in leather. They also manufactured porcelain. "Many of the porcelain cups discovered at Thebes present a tasteful arrangement of varied hues, and show the skill of the Egyptians and the great experience they possessed in this branch of art."* They were famed also for their tanning and their work in leather. In cutting the leather they made use of the semi-circular knife, and "what we term 'the circular cut' was known to the ancient Egyptians 3,300 years ago. . . . The fine quality of the straps placed across the bodies of mummies, discovered at Thebes, and the beauty of the figures stamped upon them satisfactorily prove the skill of 'the leather cutters' as well as the antiquity of embossing. . . . . Many of the occupations of their trade are portrayed on the painted walls of the tombs of Thebes. They made shoes, sandals, the coverings of seats of chairs or sofas, bow-cases, and most of the ornamental furniture of the chariot."† So great was the consumption of leather that skins were largely imported from foreign countries.

It is impossible to present in a cursory notice like

* *Ibid.* II., pp. 65-66. † *Ibid.* II., pp. 93-102.

the present any adequate picture of the manifold industries of this land. "Many arts and inventions were in common use in Egypt for centuries before they are generally supposed to have been known; and we are now and then as much surprised to find that certain things were old 3,000 years ago, as the Egyptians would be if they could hear us talk of them as late discoveries."* They were acquainted with mining, with the crushing of auriferous quartz to obtain the gold, with gold-refining, with gold-beating in which they manufactured leaf of great fineness, and with the making of gold and silver wire which they used in weaving patterns in which the details were sometimes so minute as to be scarcely visible to the naked eye. From this it appears that they were acquainted with the use of the magnifying glass. "Among the remarkable inventions of a remote era among the Egyptains may be mentioned bellows and siphons." They also used the syringe. They seem to have excelled the moderns in their knowledge of metallurgy. "The labour experienced by the French engineers, who removed the obelisk of Luxor from Thebes, in cutting a space less than two feet deep along the face of its partially-decomposed pedestal, suffices to show that even with our excellent modern implements we find considerable difficulty in doing what to the Egyptians would have been one of the least arduous tasks." There is good ground for supposing that "the Egyptians must have possessed certain secrets in hardening or tempering copper with which we are totally unacquainted. . . . . They had even the secret of giving to bronze, or brass blades a certain degree of elasticity. . . . Another remarkable feature in their bronze is the resistance it offers to the effect of the atmosphere, some continuing smooth and bright though buried for ages and since exposed to the damp of European climates. They had

* *Ibid.* II., p. 57.

also the secret of covering the surface with a rich patina of dark or light green, or other colour, by applying acids to it; as was done by the Greeks and Romans, and as we do to the iron guns on board our men-of-war."*

The moving of immense masses of stone hundreds of miles "shows that the Egyptians were well acquainted with mechanical powers, and the mode of applying a locomotive force with the most wonderful success." But their skill "was not confined to the mere moving of immense weights; their wonderful knowledge of mechanism is shown in the erection of obelisks, and in the position of large stones, raised to a considerable height, and adjusted with the utmost precision; sometimes, too, in situations where the space will not admit the introduction of the inclined plane."†

In referring to Egyptian carpentry, Wilkinson speaks of "the perfection to which they had arrived in the construction of the chairs and ottomans of their rooms." With the elegant designs of these, which have been reproduced in the furniture of modern drawing rooms, all are familiar. Of their architecture, sculpture, and painting I need not speak, nor of the embalming which has preserved the human body, and kept intact every feature, and the very expression of the face for thousands of years. It is enough to say that the superiority we have already remarked distinguished every industry from the highest to the lowest. "So wisely," says Herodotus, "was medicine managed by them that no doctor was permitted to practise any but his own peculiar branch. Some were oculists, who only studied diseases of the eye; others attended solely to complaints of the head; others to those of the teeth. . . . And it is a singular fact, that their dentists adopted a method, not very long practised in Europe, of stopping teeth with gold, proofs

* *Ibid.* II., pp. 156-159. † II., pp. 309-311.

of which have been obtained from some mummies of Thebes."* Even in the meanest employments the same excellence was shown. The skill of the shepherds in rearing animals of different kinds was the result, says Diodorous, of the experience they had inherited from their parents, and subsequently increased by their own observation; and the spirit of emulation, which is natural to all men, constantly adding to their stock of knowledge, they introduced many improvements unknown to other people. Their sheep were twice shorn, and twice brought forth lambs in the course of one year; and though climate was the chief cause of these phenomena, the skill and attention of the shepherd were also necessary; nor, if the animals were neglected, would unaided nature alone suffice for their continuance."†

Now, in the face of this stupendous and varied activity, in the face of the arts and industries into which the strength of the entire population was put and in which they had attained unrivalled excellence, it was declared that all should pass away. The pillars of the state, it was said, should be broken, and the workers for hire should be grieved in soul. There should be no work which either high or low should do. If the people were to continue and the kingdom to remain it seemed most unlikely that any such fate could ever befall them. And long after the prophecy was uttered there seemed to be no sign of its fulfilment. When Alexander conquered Egypt new markets were opened up for her products, and the destruction of Tyre and Sidon gave new life to her commerce. Diodorous, who has been so often quoted in the above description, completed his history within a few years of the birth of our Lord, and he speaks not of what had been, but of what was still a feature of his own time. Pliny wrote 100 years later and his testimony is the same.

* *Ibid.* II., p. 169. † *Ibid.* II., p. 350.

Till Christianity became the religion of the Roman empire the priests ministered in the temples, though with diminished lustre. But with this change that work for head and palm-branch passed away. In the decline which followed and which deepened so rapidly under the Arab and Turkish dominions, the glory and the wealth of Egypt perished. "In the three centuries of mixed Turkish and Mamlouk misrule which followed the Ottoman conquest, Arab art of every kind lost its cunning, and when Bonaparte's *savants* entered Cairo they found its handicrafts, as its learning, at the lowest ebb of decadence. Twenty years later Mehemet Ali began a series of efforts to revive the old mechanical skill for which Egyptian workmen had once been famous, but the special aim and the methods of his reforms in this direction were alike unsound, and costly failure was the result."* "Regardless of expense, he imported large quantities of costly machinery with skilled operatives at high wages, erecting vast mills all over the Delta." The ruins of these and of others erected by his successors in their attempt to succeed where he had failed have proved how irreversible is this doom pronounced from of old. The attempt has resulted "only in a great waste of time, money, machinery, and labour."† Relics of former skill which remained even till comparatively recent times have also passed away. Speaking of Damietta M'Coan says: "It was formerly famous for its manufacture of leather, and for the striped linen cloths called *Dimity* (from *Dimyat* the Arab name of the town) but both these have long ceased to be specialties of the place."‡ Her agriculture still remains the one employment and stay of her people, but it is not the agriculture of the past. Its unskilfulness and poverty awaken alike the scorn and the pity of the nations who admired and envied the

* De Leon, *The Khedive's Egypt,* p. 200.

† M'Coan, *Egypt as It Is,* p. 296. ‡ *Egypt as It Is,* pp. 64, 65.

agriculture which once bore the stamp of Egyptian greatness.

6. We have now to notice another remarkable feature in the prophetic picture.

THE CONDITION OF ALL THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES

is vividly portrayed. In describing the effects of the Babylonian inroad, God, speaking by Ezekiel, says: "I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years" (xxix. 12). But the ruin of that time was in itself a prophecy; for in the description of her after and permanent condition the same words recur: "They shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted" (xxx. 7). The first judgment was but the type of the desolation which was yet to fall. It was the blighting touch of the early frost which told of the setting in of a dark and bitter winter.

The prediction, it will be noticed, takes a wide range. It foretells disaster not for Egypt only, but also for all the surrounding countries. It is to be a desolation in the midst of desolations. A hurried glance at the countries bordering on Egypt will show that the words have been made good, and that even at the beginning of our era it was utterly impossible that their fulfilment could have been foreseen. On the north Egypt is bounded by the waters of the Mediterranean; but on the west, south, and partly on the east, she looked out upon other countries which, long after the beginning of the Christian era, were great and populous. On the north-west lies the province of Barca, the eastern division of Tripoli. It includes the ancient Cyrenaïca, sometimes called Pentapolis from the five great Cities of Cyrene, Apollonia, Ptolemais, Arsinoë, and Beren-

ice. Readers of the New Testament are familiar with its mention of Cyrene, and the "parts of Libya about Cyrene." Over the whole country were scattered wealthy and spendid cities, which retained their prosperity at the time of our Lord. In the year 115 A. D. the Jews, great numbers of whom dwelt in Cyrenaïca, broke out into rebellion. During the insurrection and its suppression the country suffered greatly; but it was colonized afresh by the Emperor Hadrian. Under the fostering care of the Romans it revived, and, though it afterwards suffered much from the oppression of its Greek governors, it continued to prosper. In the fourth century it was overrun by barbarous hordes from the south, and the city of Cyrene was destroyed. Three centuries afterwards a heavier blow fell. The Persians under Khosroo Purveez invaded Egypt, and then poured into Cyrenaïca, committing such dreadful havoc that the country was almost depopulated. Under the Saracens the work of devastation was completed. Cyrenaïca was so oppressed that the inhabitants of Barca, for example, emigrated in a body, and that city has since wholly disappeared. The entire country gradually succumbed, and its cities have remained in ruins ever since. There are now only two places which deserve the name of towns; and the rest of the country is inhabited solely by wandering Arabs. Cyrenaïca still deserves the name "Jebel Akhbar" (the green mountain), but the luxurious and pleasure-loving Cyrenians have long since passed away. Their cities, once filled with the noise of busy, joyous, life, are silent as the grave, save when the Arabs chance to rest for a while within their ruined walls. On that side of Egypt there is certainly desolation.

To the south-west of Barca is Fezzan, the ancient Phazania, the great oasis of the Sahara which bounds Egypt on the west. In 19 B. C. Cornelius Balba obtained a triumph for the conquest of the country, and representations of its cities formed part of the proces-

sional display. This country also has been desolated. Its great cities have long since crumbled into ruin; and the entire population for a territory of three hundred miles in length and two hundred in breadth, does not exceed twenty-six thousand, or the number of inhabitants in one of our minor towns. Within the past century its trade has almost wholly disappeared. "The inhabitants formerly depended to a great extent on the caravans which passed through the country; but this trade has been almost wholly lost, and Fezzan has in consequence become greatly impoverished and depopulated. The oases are capable of yielding an ample supply of the necessaries of life, but cultivation is neglected, and several oases have been altogether abandoned."

We turn to the south. The southern boundary of Egypt was drawn at Philæ, above the first cataract. Beyond this stretched the great kingdom of Ethopia, sharing with Egypt itself the blessing of the same mighty stream which rolls onward its sea-like waters from the Equator to the Mediterranean. For about fifteen miles below the junction of the Blue and the White Nile, the river flows through a gloomy pass between the mountains, and then sweeps out into broad plains covered with vegetation as far as the eye can reach. In this fertile district lay Meroë, the ancient capital of Ethiopia. It has been supposed by some that Egypt itself was colonized from Ethiopia; and it is certain that the latter was at a very early period characterized by order, civilization, and strength. Herodotus tells us that Ethiopia was never conquered by a foreign power, and yet we know that as early as the twelfth dynasty, at least two thousand years before our era, the Ethiopians were reckoned among the most formidable enemies of Egypt. Their power must have remained unbroken, therefore, for many centuries. About 711 B.C. they became masters of Egypt under their king Sabacon, the So of Scripture, by whom and

his successors it was held for more than fifty years. Cambyses, incited by the ambition to extend his conquests farther than had been done by any who had gone before him, resolved upon the subjugation of Ethiopia. He sent ambassadors into the country with presents, whose real mission was to act as spies. The king, reading the purpose which lay beneath the show of respect and friendship, bade the ambassadors carry back his bow, with the message that when their master could bend it as easily as he himself could he might begin the war. Cambyses was filled with rage. He invaded the country, but, in attempting to lead his army by a shorter route across the desert, he was compelled, after his troops had endured the most terrible sufferings, to make an ignominious retreat.

To such inroads Ethiopia was frequently subjected, but it was never annexed to Egypt. It was never conquered even by the Romans, and it was still formidable in the time of Diocletian, at the close of the third century. He persuaded the Noubas to remove from the deserts of Libya, and to occupy a district on the frontier of Egypt, extending seven days march towards Ethiopia. They held this territory on the condition of their protecting the empire from the inroads of the Blemmyes and the Ethiopians. "The treaty," says Gibbon, "long subsisted; and till the establishment of Christianity introduced stricter notions of religious worship, it was annually ratified by a solemn sacrifice in the isle of Elephantine, in which the Romans, as well as the barbarians, adored the same visible or invisible powers of the universe." This kingdom was afterwards greatly extended, and its capital was fixed as far south as Dongola. When the Arabs entered Egypt in 638, they found the Noubas a strong Christian kingdom. It retained its independence till the thirteenth century. But the repeated inroads of the Mohammedans sapped the foundations of its strength. The formerly strong government was overthrown, and the country was

broken up into various small states. The Mohammedans poured in, and Christianity was gradually extinguished from the south of Egypt to the borders of Abyssinia. This country also is a desolation. Its empire and its strength are gone. The sites of its ancient cities are matter of conjecture. The conquest of the country by the Egyptian government was as fruitless in wealth as it was in glory. The eye seeks in vain for any present token of greatness or prosperity. That it once was great its ruins and the page of history alone declare. But it was simply impossible that its desolation could have been foreseen by man even seven centuries after the beginning of the Christian era.

Of the countries to the east of Egypt we need say nothing now. These prophecy has singled out by name, and their condition and story will come before us again. It is enough to say that desolation has fallen upon them all; a desolation which, though predicted from of old, yet lingered long before it fell, and which, even at the beginning of our era, could not have been regarded as even probable.

7. EGYPT HERSELF WAS TO SHARE IN THE GENERAL DECAY.

Her kingdom was to continue, but her fulness and might were to pass away. "They shall be desolate among the countries that are desolate." Contrast the Egypt of to-day with the Egypt of the Roman conquest; compare the luxury and magnificence of the one with the meanness and wretchedness of the other, and no further proof will be required that she has shared the fate of her sister countries. The doom has fallen upon her fertile fields, as well as upon her civilization and her cities. The total area of Egypt was ascertained, by the French survey in 1798, to be 115,200 square miles. Only 9,582, "including the Nile bed and

the islands within it,"* were watered by the river, and fit, therefore, for cultivation. Under recent improvements the land capable of being tilled amounts to 11,351 square miles, less than a tenth of the entire surface of the country. But all is not told when this is said. More than a third of this, though irrigated, is not tilled, and the land at present under cultivation is only about one-sixteenth of the whole area of the country.

The desolation is not proved by statistics alone. It is painfully obvious. Sir Gardner Wilkinson says: "The plain of San" (the ancient Zoan) "is very extensive, but thinly inhabited; no village exists in the immediate vicinity of ancient Tanis; and when looking from the mounds of this once splendid city towards the distant palms of indistinct villages, we cannot fail to be struck by the desolation spread around it. The 'field of Zoan' is now a barren waste: a canal passes through it without being able to fertilize the soil."† Speaking of the Fyoóm, a district above Cairo, on the other side of the Nile, he says the mounds of towns "occur in many parts of the Fyoóm; and though we cannot credit the tradition of the people that it formerly contained 366 towns and villages, it is evident that it was a populous *nome* of Ancient Egypt, and that many once existed both in the centre and on the now barren skirts of the Fyoóm. Indeed, the cultivated land extended far beyond its present limits: a great portion of the desert plain was then taken into cultivation, and I have seen several places where canals and the traces of cultivated fields are still discernible to a considerable distance east and west of the modern irrigated lands."‡

But the special feature in the desolation of Egypt, and that which was to make her continuance consistent with her decay, was this: "Her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted." No words can

* *Egypt as It Is*, p. 19.

† *Murray's Handbook of Egypt*, p. 234. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 256.

more graphically set before us Egypt as it is. She is indeed "the land of ruins;" she is one vast burial-place of the art and magnificence of the past, and her present homes are, as it were, dwellings among the tombs. She cannot be said to have preserved one ancient city. "The present town of Assouan has been built a little to the north of the former town of Saracenic origin, the ruins of which are seen above it, and which was itself built upon the ruins of the Roman city. The whole town is encompassed with vestiges of buildings." Alexandria cannot be reckoned among the ancient cities of Egypt. It was unknown to the Pharaohs. But the city of Alexander, of the Ptolemies, of the Romans, of the lower empire, even of the Arab conquest, will now be sought in vain. "The site of the ancient city, which is to the south of the present town, presents an immense field of confused ruins; over a space of from six to seven miles in circuit is spread an assemblage of broken columns, obelisks, and shapeless masses of architecture, rising frequently to a greater height than the surrounding houses. Here, amid the heaps of rubbish, are seen some churches, mosques, and monasteries, and three small clusters of dwellings, formerly three towns. Traces are discernible of ancient streets in straight lines, and some ruins of colonnades mark the sites of palaces."* These ruins have been still further "wasted." "Little now remains," says Wilkinson, "of the splendid edifices of Alexandria; and the few columns and traces of walls which a few years ago rose above the mounds, are now no longer seen."

Even the Damietta of the crusades, the ancient Tamiathis, has passed away. In 1249 it was taken by the Christians, and surrendered soon after. In 1250 it was destroyed by the Mohammedans themselves, because of its exposed position, and a new Damietta was built five and a half miles farther south. Nor is it only

* *Modern Traveller* (published 1827), Vol. I., pp. 189, 190.

in the wasting of its ancient cities that the fulfilment of the prediction is seen. Geezeh was a favourite summer resort of the Memlooks and the inhabitants of Cairo. "It is now a mere village, with a few cafés, ruined bazaars, and the wrecks of houses . . . . Leo Africanus" (writing about the beginning of the sixteenth century) "calls it a city, beautified by the palaces of the Memlooks, who there sought retirement from the bustle of Cairo, and frequented by numerous merchants and artisans. . . . The mosks and beautiful buildings at the river side are no longer to be seen at Geezeh; and the traveller, as he leaves his boat, wanders amidst uneven heaps of rubbish, and the ill-defined limits of potters' yards, till he issues from a breach in the crumbling Memlock walls into the open plain."* One more instance may suffice. "Rosetta has always been considered the most agreeable and the prettiest town of Egypt, celebrated for its gardens, and looked upon by the Cairenes, as well as Alexandrians, as a most delightful retreat during summer. It has still its gardens, which surround it on three sides, and the advantages of situation; but it has lost much of its importance as a town, and has ceased to be the resort of strangers. The population, too, is so much diminished that a great proportion of its houses are completely deserted and falling, if not already fallen, into ruins."†

There is no sign, therefore, that, though the ancient ruins were wholly swept away, the cities of Egypt should not still be among the cities that are wasted. This burden of decay Egypt has never thrown aside. It cannot remove it now, and beneath it its cities are crumbling still. And no words can give us a truer and more vivid picture of its desolation than is given in this brief but clear utterance of prophecy: "Her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted."

* *Murray's Handbook of Egypt*, p. 173. † *Ibid*, p. 104.

The traveller cannot turn in any direction without encountering mounds of ruins which mark the sites of ancient cities, more or less "wasted." Like sheaves on the harvest-field they lie thickly strewn over the whole country; and its attraction and wonder are not the Egypt of the present, but what is still found in these heaps of the Egypt of the past.

8. Let us now glance at what is said of the possessors of Egypt.

THE CHARACTER OF ITS MASTERS

is first of all described in one clear, emphatic word: "I will sell the land into the hand of THE WICKED" (Ezek. xxx. 12). It may be noticed in passing that the phrase, "I will sell the land," denotes, in the language of Scripture, its unresisting surrender into the hand of an enemy. As slaves are sold into the hand of a master, so will they be sold into the hand of "the wicked." The dominion foreshadowed is one of irresponsible unscrupulousness and ferocity. The slave has no rights, and the wicked has no mercy. It is strange to find that almost the very words of the prophecy have been unconsciously repeated by those who have weighed the condition of this unhappy country. Volney, for example, calls it "the country of *slavery and tyranny;*" and Malte Brun speaks of *"the arbitrary sway of* THE RUFFIAN MASTERS of Egypt." Of Ali Bey (who reigned from 1766 to 1772) it has been said: *"Like his predecessors,* he considered Egypt *as his private property or life estate, and the natives as the live-stock disposable at his pleasure."** De Leon says of Abbas Pasha that he "was arbitrary, rapacious, and cruel to the last degree." To show fully how strikingly these words, "I will sell the land into the hand of the wicked" have been fulfilled, we should have to write the history of Egypt. The sum of its story in every period throughout all its

* *Modern Traveller—Egypt,* I., p. 138.

changes, from the prophet's time to the present, is rightly told in those words alone—the land has been sold into the hand of the wicked. We name a few facts. The first governor of Egypt under the Roman Empire, Cornelius Gallus, was guilty of such extortion and oppression that he was disgraced, and died by his own hand. A revolt was crushed by Diocletian in 286 with remorseless severity. Alexandria surrendered at discretion, but was shown no mercy. "Many thousands of the citizens perished in a promiscuous slaughter; and there were few obnoxious persons in Egypt who escaped a sentence of death, or at least of exile. The fate of Busiris and Coptos was still more melancholy than that of Alexandria. Those proud cities, the former distinguished by its antiquity, the latter enriched by the passage of the Indian trade, were utterly destroyed by the arms and by the severe order of Diocletian."* The oppression of the Greek Empire became so intolerable to the Egyptians that the Arabs, burning though they were with the first fervour of their fierce and intolerant fanaticism, were everywhere hailed by them as deliverers. For a short time it seemed as if a change had been made for the better. But it was impossible that the Christianity of Egypt and the Mohammedanism of its new lords could long share the same land in peace. The Egyptians, persecuted and oppressed, rose in insurrection, and were subdued with immense bloodshed. The persecution was continued with circumstances of grosser outrage. A special tax was imposed upon the monks, and as each one paid the tax he was branded upon the hand. Any monk, who was afterwards unable to show this barbarous tax-receipt, had his hand cut off. Subsequently, every Copt had his hand similarly branded; and the whole community was so oppressed that another rebellion was the result, which, like the former, was

* Gibbon.

crushed and followed by another terrible persecution. The Copts were compelled to wear a distinguishing dress, and their proud spirits were borne down under other marks of shame. About the end of the tenth century they were made to wear, suspended from their necks, a wooden cross of five pounds weight, and to go clothed in deep black, a colour peculiarly odious to the Egyptian Mohammedans. In the beginning of the fourteenth century they were so overwhelmed by Moslem hatred that multitudes of them, wearied of a hopeless struggle, embraced Mohammedanism. The small remnant who still clung to Christianity, though now less oppressed, pay a heavier tribute than is imposed upon their Mohammedan countrymen.

But those who apostatized did not escape from their evil destiny by the simple expedient of changing their religion. They form by far the largest portion of the *fellaheen,* the cultivators of the soil, and these "the hand of the wicked" has long held in its savage grip. "How is agriculture to improve," Miss Martineau asks, "under such arrangements as the following?—The cultivator undertakes to till a certain quantity of land, all the land, it is understood, being the Pasha's property, except such as he pensions or gratifies certain parties with. The cultivator engages, in return for being furnished with all that is needed for its cultivation, to hand over a certain amount (in proportion to the produce) after harvest. He receives, among other requisites, an order for a good and sufficient quantity of seed-corn from the government granary. When he presents the order, the great official gentleman at the granary directs a subordinate officer to supply the applicant with three-quarters of the specified quantity, he retaining the other quarter for his own fee. The second officer subtracts a second quarter; and the cultivator sows his field with half the proper seed!"

Wilkinson found, as the result of a careful calculation, that, *in the most favourable circumstances,* the

peasant had only two and two-fifths farthings a day on which to support himself and his family.* The consequence is that, to keep themselves from actual starvation, the peasants have to convey grain secretly from the fields to their houses, and have thus, while labouring with their hands most diligently, to secure their bread by theft. It is impossible to extort the enormous taxes which the poor fellaheen have to pay without the torture of the bastinado, or what an apologist for the government of Ismail Pasha gaily calls "stick logic."† But it is not government oppression alone which shows how terribly true are the words, "the hand of the wicked," as a description of the power which holds this unhappy country. The land groans under the ravages of a whole army of plunderers. "Every Verres is enriched by the spoliation of the peasant, from the Mahmour to the Mukuddem, or beadle, of the lowest governor."‡ Lane says, "It would be scarcely possible for them" (the peasants) "to suffer more and live."§

We know how unenviable is the condition of the Christian peasant under Turkish rule. But, comparing him with the fellah of Egypt, Sir George Campbell says: "If the Bulgarian were content to be a political slave and to submit to occasional outrage, he might have been in many respects tolerably well to do. Far otherwise is the lot of the Egyptian fellah. . . . The taxation is enormously higher; the methods of squeezing more severe; the personal treatment more uniformly degrading; the bastinado and the corvée are in full force. If a man has anything he dare not show it, and the very beginnings of material improvement are thus cut off to the fellah." The Right Honourable S. Cave, who was sent out by our Government to in-

* *Modern Egypt and Thebes,* Vol. I., p. 468.
† M'Coan, *Egypt as It Is,* p. 26.
‡ *Modern Egypt and Thebes,* Vol. I., p. 469.
§ *Modern Egyptians,* Vol. I., 178.

quire into the Egyptian finances, endeavours in his report, presented in 1876, to account for the corruption which pervades the whole administration. "From the pashas downwards," he says, "every office is a tenancy at will; and experience shows that, while dishonesty goes wholly or partially unpunished, independence of thought and action, resolution to do one's duty and to resist the peculation and neglect which pervade every department, give rise to intrigues which, sooner or later, bring about the downfall of honest officials."

Volumes might be written on the text, "I will sell the land into the hand of the wicked." The terrible impress of that hand is visible everywhere. The horrors of the conscription, to escape which parents systematically mutilate their children, and of the corvées, or forced labour levies (in which the peasants are driven in herds from their fields, no matter though the harvest is wasted on which their own and their families' bread depends, and guarded by the military like convicts till their enforced task is done), are well known. The following words may give us some conception of what these things mean for the people. "This afternoon," writes Lord Haddo, "we witnessed a distressing scene. Some men had been forcibly impressed at a village, and were lying bound in the boats which were to convey them to Cairo, and which, the wind being contrary, were slowly hauled along the shore, while the wives and mothers of the men from whom they were thus separated for life, followed howling and shrieking for many miles." Attentions were paid to him as the eldest son of the Premier of England (Lord Aberdeen), and he says: "The worst of it is, that the sheikh of each village is ordered to come down to the water with fifty men to haul the boat in case the wind should fail; and the violence, and even cruelty, with which the unfortunate fellahs are driven from their fields with the sticks and whips of the cavasses, interferes with my enjoyment."

Mehemet Ali, in one of his instructions to the provincial governors, said of his conscripts: "Some draw their teeth, some put out their eyes, and others break their arms, or otherwise maim themselves." And in order to put a stop to the practice, largely indulged in by Egyptian mothers, of putting out one of the eyes of their male children to save them from the conscription, he formed a one-eyed regiment for garrison duty. Were any consideration or care shown for the soldiers, military service could not possibly be the terror it is to the fellaheen. But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. The spirit in which the people are treated may be understood from the following extracts from the work of Mr. Villiers Stuart, which is in substance a government report, and which we may therefore accept as written calmly and after due investigation. He found 40,000 men making a canal in Upper Egypt to irrigate the lands of some rich Pashas. No food was supplied to them, nor was sleeping or other accommodation provided, nor tools with which to do the work of excavation. They worked from sunrise to sunset, with no intermission save the few moments during which they rushed down to the river to soak the hard bread, their only food, which their friends had sent from their distant homes. The great majority of them had to tear up the soil and stones and to fill their baskets with their hands. He adds: "Ophthalmia is one evil that results; I cannot imagine a better receipt for the wholesale manufacture of this malady than to work men to exhaustion in fiery heat, glare, and dust all day, and then to expose them at night to the heavy dew and frosty temperature, with the bare ground for their couch, and their calico rags for their only covering."*

"Forced labour in the factories has been abolished on paper, but in Upper Egypt it is still in full swing."†

* *Egypt After the War*, p. 288. † *Ibid.*, p. 319.

There the fellahs are subjected to the hardest slavery. Guards are placed at the doors who prevent all egress and the labourers are kept in the building day and night, being compelled to sleep on the stone floor and amid the noise of the machinery. "In 1879 we were witnesses of the following incident at one of the sugar factories. While we were there there was a sudden commotion, and we found that one of the men had fallen from a gallery and was mortally injured; he was carried out in a dying state. On emerging we inquired for him, and were shocked to find him lying in the sun and covered with flies—left there to die like a dog. No man had had the charity to moisten his lips or to carry him into the shade, or to fan the flies away, or to alleviate his sufferings in any way."*

On some of the corvées, not only are able-bodied men compelled to toil, but even "small children, boys and girls as young as seven or eight years," who are kept "walking all day up and down the banks with their baskets of earth."† As showing further the character of those into whose hands Egypt has been sold we may note that under the present dynasty, which has been lauded as having done so much for the country, the wretched fellaheen have been subjected to repeated acts of spoliation. At Thebes the Government took part of the land arbitrarily at £7 an acre, and relet it at more than a third of that sum annually. The consequence has been that the people there have been plunged into poverty. Some of them have rented portions from the Government, but "it too often happens that after digging and sowing the land they in the end get no reward but a beating."‡ We have heard much in connection with the debt of the Daïra lands —the property of the state, and the private property of the late Khedive. They are simply the fruit of the

* *Ibid.*, pp. 319, 320. † De Leon, *The Khedive's Egypt*, p. 214.
‡ *Egypt After the War*, p. 306.

most unblushing and unscrupulous robbery. "Both of them," says Mr. Villiers Stuart, "represent an enormous amount of injustice, tyranny, and oppression."*

"Like master, like man." The example of those in high places has been only too closely followed by their subordinates. "During this portion of my tour," says Mr. Stuart, "I happened to be witness of an incident which is highly instructive, and serves as a typical instance of the behaviour of the subordinate officials towards the rank and file of the people. As I passed, a gang of men in chains, probably for non-payment of taxes, were drawn up in front of the Post Office. One of these presented a docket to the postmaster. He answered roughly, 'You have had your letter.' At the same time he tore up the docket and threw it out of the window. I took up the torn pieces and found that they were a warrant for the delivery of a registered letter. I asked the postmaster how it came that if the man had received his letter he had been allowed to retain the voucher. The postmaster, seeing that I was disposed not to let the matter drop, now changed his tone and said to the claimant, 'If you will get two respectable townspeople to certify your identity, you shall have your letter.' It appeared, therefore, that his first assertion that the man had received his letter was a positive falsehood. This incident furnishes one more illustration of how corrupt and dishonest the official classes are, from the highest to the lowest."†

Even the courts of justice, where the oppressed might plead their cause, are simply additional instruments of extortion and wrong. "It is bad enough in any country to be occupied in lawsuits; but nowhere does a poor man find so much difficulty in obtaining justice as in Egypt. He is not only put off from day to day, but obliged to run from one person to another, to no purpose, for days, weeks, or months; and unless

* *Ibid.*, p. 306. † *Ibid.*, p. 262.

he can manage to collect sufficient to bribe the *bash-kateb* and other employés of the court, he may hope in vain to obtain justice, or even attention to his complaints."* The spirit of high-handed and cruel mastery marks the procedure of all the tribunals. "Criminal cases are dealt with by the Mahmours and Mudirs in despotic and arbitrary fashion; the use of the 'courbash' (hippopotamus-hide whip) and of the stick has increased since the rebellion, as also imprisonment in heavy chains. These punishments often fall upon the innocent; for instance, if a fellah, selected for military service, runs away to the desert, his relatives are chained and thrown into prison, although in no way accessory to the offence."†

"How is justice," Mr. Villiers Stuart asks an intelligent farmer, "administered in your district? It is all by bribery; a poor man has no chance. If he is wronged, if it is a small debt, or if he has been maltreated, or beaten, or robbed, there is a small local tribunal; the constable of the village reports the case to the Mahmour, who if he deems it sufficiently important reports it to the Mudir. If it is a land dispute, *e. g.*, about boundaries or successions, it goes to Tantah; three or four years, or five years may elapse before it is settled. If he has a buffalo or a cow, he must sell it to make presents for chief clerks and their subordinates and even high officials. He is soon ruined. In other cases which are reported to the Mahmour, and by the Mahmour to the Mudir, the man who can afford to bribe the highest gets the most favourable reports."‡

This corruption taints the entire official body. The Mudirs and Mahmours are removed with every change of ministry. And hence "they only try," says Mr.

* Wilkinson; *Murray's Handbook of Egypt*, p. 156.

† *Egypt After the War*, p. 158. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 22.

Stuart, "to make the most of their opportunity and to enrich themselves as fast as they can during their precarious term of office. I have known Egypt for many years, and I fear I must come to the conclusion that venality and corruption are so universal, so ingrained in the social fabric, from the highest to the lowest" that he believes the only hope of Egypt lies in having an entirely new set of officials, and Englishmen if possible.* Nor is this all. "Egyptian prisons are Bastilles in which men in power immure arbitrarily those who have offended them, or whom they have any motive in getting out of the way. They are sent there without trial or enquiry under *letters de cachet;* and there they may remain for years, forgotten perhaps by the tyrant who sent them thither, and without means or opportunity of bringing their case to the notice of those who might obtain tardy justice and release for them."†

The masters of Egypt have been increased within our own times. We know what the bondholders are, and whether the terms on which the loans were advanced, or the demands which are to-day insisted upon, deserve the epithet which the Scripture has applied to the other lords of this unhappy people. But the land has been of late years covered with a flood of usurers, and between them and the bondholders the very heart's blood of the people is being wrung out. The debt of the fellahs is estimated to amount to two-thirds of the national debt, "and upon this vast sum interest, varying from 3 to 5, 8 and even 10 per cent. per month is either paid or is accumulating, and increasing the indebtedness at an alarming rate." The fellahs, unable to meet their debts, are being deprived of their land. "A rapid process of transfer is taking place of the property, *i. e.*, the land, of the native Egyptians to Greeks, and Syrians, and other Christian (!) usurers."‡

* *Ibid.*, pp. 158, 159. † *Ibid.*, p. 42. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 41.

These usurers are as unscrupulous as the rest into whose hands this people have been sold, and we, as a nation, have unfortunately and unwittingly played into the usurers' hands. It was the custom of Egypt that no land could be seized for debt, and this was one excuse for the exorbitant interest, sometimes amounting to 130 per cent, per annum. But we have been accessory to the change which removed this last barrier which stood between the fellahs and spoliation. "We have converted these ill-secured debts into first-class land mortgages. Arabi drove out these pauperizers of the people, but we have brought them back by force of arms."*

Mr. Stuart thus describes the palaces of these Egyptian Shylocks. "Just outside many of the Delta villages may be observed a superior house built in European style: the walls stained cream color, or pale blue, or rose pink, with bright green venetian blinds; a great improvement on the raw mud-brick structures which form the staple of native dwellings. These edifices will always be found on enquiry to belong to the local money-lender—Greek, Syrian, Armenian, or Jewish. He is sure to plant himself wherever the soil is extra fertile, and the neighbourhood extra advantageous."† He visited one, and found it "fitted up with European furniture and French mirrors." "Everything around betokened prosperity and abundance. . . . There could scarcely be a more striking contrast than the condition presented by the neighbouring village." The villagers informed him that all the usurer's lands had belonged to them. He adds, "It had now come to this that while the foreign usurer had become a wealthy landed proprietor, not one of the natives had more than a dozen acres left. . . . I took a sad and sympathetic leave of the poor fellows: decidedly that was not a flourishing community. That

* *Ibid.*, p. 60. † *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Christian establishment close by was sucking out their very life-blood, like a tumour or a wen, which draws to itself the juices of the whole body until all is exhausted. The time could not be far off when every peasant proprietor there will be reduced to the position of a labourer on the Greek's all-devouring estate. The process of adding house to house and field to field . . . has been brought into vigorous life in Egypt of late years by the operation of the International Tribunals. No feature of the social condition of the Delta forced itself more prominently on my notice throughout my tour of inquiry in its provinces, than this question of the indebtedness of the fellahs in connection with the new tribunals; and I may as well take this opportunity of summing up the conclusions it forced upon me.

"All the witnesses agreed that the usurers—Greek, Syrian, and Jewish—have been the main cause of the hatred with which the Christians were regarded during the rebellion of Arabi; that they have dealt most mercilessly with the fellahs, entangling them in a hopeless net of indebtedness, and using their power to possess themselves of their lands. . . . They have woven round them a tangled network of debt which no Colenso could unravel—the moderate sum originally advanced, compound interest at exorbitant rates, sums advanced successively since, with their interests, the reckoning further complicated by sums paid on account, no receipts being given. The fellahs have long ago abandoned in despair the task of comprehending their financial position, with its hopeless intricacies, and only feel that they have nothing which they can call their own."*

Everywhere there is the same unscrupulous rapacity, the same disregard of right and justice, which show how marvellous are these words, "I will sell the land

* *Ibid*, pp. 55-57.

into the hands of the wicked." Take them simply as a description. Are there any other words that can so clearly mirror the condition of this unhappy land, and that will state it with such brevity yet fullness, with such deep insight and pathos? As a description it is marvellous; but what shall we say of it as a prophecy?

But not only is the character of the masters of Egypt foretold;

9. THEIR NATIONALITY

is also strictly defined; "I will make the land waste and all that is therein by the hand of

STRANGERS."

(Ezek. xxx. 12). It might be supposed that this is merely a re-statement of the prediction which declared that there should no more be a native prince upon the throne of Egypt. But it really carries us farther. The latter prophecy would have been fulfilled had one race —the Persians, or the Greeks, for example—continued age after age to lord it over Egypt. It is intimated now, however, that the Egyptians will know the mastery of more than one people. The inheritance will pass from race to race who, all of them, will stand in this relationship of strangers to the people over whom they exercise their cruel mastery. We have only to call to mind the well-known antipathy of the Egyptians to foreigners, the contempt in which they held them, and their treatment of their captives in compelling them to toil under the lash of the taskmaster upon their public works, to see the fitness of the doom. They boasted that upon their mighty monuments no Egyptian had laboured; and now it is foretold that by the hand of races, such as they had loathed and despised and enslaved, they themselves will be judged for their cruelty and pride.

When we turn from the prophecy which says who Egypt's masters will be, and ask of history who they

have been, we are answered in the very words of Scripture. They have been *strangers*. The Persians were succeeded by the Macedonians, these by the Romans, and latterly by the Greeks of the Eastern Empire. The Empire fell, in Egypt and the East, before the Arabian Caliphs. "About the year 887, the power of the caliphs was succeeded by the reign of the Turcomans, their own janizaries, whom they had called to their aid. The dynasties of the Tolonides, the Fatimites, and the Aïoobites, ruled over Egypt till the year 1250. The Mamelukes, or military slaves of the Turcoman sultans of Egypt, then massacred their masters and took possession of the sovereignty. The Turkish dynasty, or that of the Bassarite Mamelukes, reigned till 1382. The Circassian race, or that of the Bordjite Mamelukes, ruled here till within these very few years. . . . In 1798 the French abolished the Mameluke aristocracy, and made themselves masters of the whole of Egypt."* After two short years the French retired, when the Mamelukes strove for the sovereignty with the Turks of Constantinople by intrigue and assassination. Mehemet Ali foiled both with their own weapons and founded the present dynasty. An Albanian Turk and a soldier of fortune, he entered Egypt in command of 300 men, sent from his native town to assist in expelling the French from Egypt, and, step by step, through wiles and blood, he fought his way to the throne. And not only is it true that foreigners have filled the throne, they have held almost every office of emolument and trust. Mehemet Ali among his many reforms attempted to change this practice. He appointed native governors "with the very liberal intention of allowing the peasants to be ruled by their compatriots, instead of the more humiliating custom of subjecting them to foreigners."† The change had continued for only five years, when it was "found

* Malte Brun. † Wilkinson.

necessary to return to the old system;" and to-day it is as true as ever that the country is in the hands of "strangers."

The last point we name is

10. THE WORK OF EGYPT'S MASTERS.

"*I will make the land waste and all that is therein* by the hands of strangers" (Ezek. xxx. 12). The desolation, which we have already seen was to fall, might have come in many ways. It might have sprung from causes over which man had no control, and it might have fallen in spite of the best efforts of the foreign successors of the Pharaohs. But here the story of the desolation is fully told. It will be the result of long and increasing oppression. It will not happen in spite of the efforts of these strangers: it is the work for which they are to come, and, when they have passed away, this will remain as the token that they have been. Egypt's native rulers were remembered by the advancement of their country's weal, and by public works and monuments which filled the breast of posterity with a noble pride and emulation: but the memorial of these masters will be waste and deepening desolation.

Has the work been done? Is the desolation of Egypt distinctly traceable to the strangers? From every side witnesses arise which testify to the truth of the prediction. The strangers have wasted *the land.* I have already referred to the neglect of the canals. The revenues which ought to have been, and which would have been but for the most unprincipled voracity, applied to their maintenance have been withheld, and what might have been fruitful fields have become a desert. What has been already said of the steadily deepening desolation of Egypt has been shown to be the work of its foreign masters. And other strangers than its masters have aided in the work of destruction. In 1801 the English, in order to protect their camp

from an attack by the French, cut through the embankment between the Bay of Aboukir and the basin of the former Lake Mareotis, and the salt waters now roll over forty villages and the cultivated lands which surrounded them.

The *people* have been wasted. Clot Bey, writing in 1840, calculates that one-half the population has perished since the time of the Persian conquest. There is no reason whatever, save the continued oppression of the people, why the population should not even now spread out to its ancient dimensions. Were all the land cultivated, which can still be sown, the produce would be sufficient to maintain a population of 8,000,000—about twice the number of the present inhabitants. The people do not perish, therefore, for lack of room; their decrease is not simply the consequence of the lands being wasted. It is wrought by the hand of the strangers. The villages are depopulated first of all by the conscription. Lane calculated that, under Mehemet Ali, every second man out of the whole number fit for military service was taken for the army and navy; and M'Coan admits that the conscription is still out of all proportion to the military necessities of the country, and a serious hindrance to the progress of agriculture. Another cause of the decrease is the corvée—compulsory labour upon public works, and on the estates of the Khedive and others whose demands the poor fellaheen can neither resist nor gainsay. Some notion of what this means for the peasant may be gained from the story of the Mahmoudieh canal, as told by Mr. Stuart. "The important waterway between the Nile and Egypt's greatest sea-port has a sad history, and furnishes a terrible illustration of the abuses to which the corvée is liable. It was constructed entirely by forced labour, and the sacrifice of life was frightful; those who perished were buried in the enbankment as the work progressed. Mehemet Ali had commanded all the sheiks in the Delta to

bring the flower of the population from their villages for the work of excavating a waterway from the Nile to Alexandria. In obedience to this call 313,000 persons were assembled along its future course, *i. e.*, at the rate of 7,825 per mile. But the Government had, as usual with forced labour, provided neither food nor tools; the poor wretches had to dig out the canal with their fingers, and to remove the soil in baskets provided by themselves. As the work progressed, and they got below the level of Lake Mareotis the water oozed in, and they toiled in fetid mud. They were kept at the work by soldiers who lined the banks with bayonets fixed; they had no respite from sunrise to sunset, and they lay in their cotton rags on the banks from sunset to sunrise, half-starved, maltreated, with festering fingers, and fever-stricken frames. The tyrant's commands were urgent; in ten months his wishes were accomplished, and a canal, 40 miles long and 200 feet wide, was excavated with men's hands, but 23,000 of the poor wretches perished in that time from exhaustion and the cruelty of their taskmasters, and were covered up in the mud of the embankments. If placed lengthways along its course there would be throughout the route but an interval of 2 yards between the feet of one corpse and the skull of the next —a grim line of sentinels.

"I once travelled by boat through the Mahmoudieh canal from Alexandria to Atfeh, a distance of forty miles, but during the entire trip I could not divest myself of the feeling that I was between walls into which the bodies of 23,000 human beings had been built. As I sailed along, the banks seemed to my mind to grow transparent, and I saw nothing but those miles of skeletons, awful trophies of tyranny and cruelty on the one hand, and of human suffering and misery on the other."*

The *resources* of the country have been wasted. We

* *Egypt After the War,* pp. 108-109.

have seen that its skilled industries have gone. All attempts to revive them have failed. The wealth of the country has disappeared, and in its stead there stands a liability which it is utterly unable to discharge. Ismail Pasha found the finances burdened with a small debt of about three millions and a quarter. It soon swelled to the enormous amount of more than 91 millions. The history of the loans reveals the terrible recklessness of the "strangers." None of them were negotiated for less than 12 per cent., and the railway loan with its sinking fund cost more than 29. As much as 36 per cent. per annum has been paid for the renewal of bills. Out of five loans, amounting in nominal value to nearly 56 millions, only 35 millions reached the Egyptian Treasury. Mr. Cave reports that on this amount the Egyptian Government had paid, by the end of 1875, in interest and sinking funds, nearly 30 millions, and that notwithstanding these huge payments nearly 47 millions—that is, 12 millions more than the Government originally received—remained to be redeemed.

If we ask how the money has been expended, we merely open another chapter in the story of the "waste." Of "the barrage," a scheme for damning up the Nile, which cost three millions, and which has been in process from the days of Mehemet Ali to our time, Mr. Stuart says: "Instead of traversing the stream higher up where it is confined within a single channel, the (French) engineers had chosen a site below the point at which the mighty flood divides, thus augmenting the expense of construction and ensuring heavier commissions and percentages. . . . The costly structure is more picturesque than useful; the foundations are not deep enough to withstand the enormous pressure of the waters when the sluices are closed, and consequently it has served to irrigate the contractors' pockets more than anything else."*

* *Ibid.* 15.

And that which is more precious than land, or skill, or wealth—the patriotism, the national sentiment of the people, has also been wasted. I place two statements together. Of the Egyptians as they entered upon their long ordeal of suffering Wilkinson says:—"Though far better pleased with the rule of the Macedonian kings than of the Persians, the Egyptians were never thoroughly satisfied to be subject to foreigners. . . . To the Romans they were equally troublesome. . . . Proud of the former greatness of their nation they could never get over the disgrace of their fallen condition; and, so strong was their bias towards their own institutions and ancient form of government, that no foreign king, whose habits differed from their own, could reconcile them to his rule. For no people were more attached to their own country, to their own peculiar institutions, and to their own reputation as a nation."* Such was the Egyptian of the Persian the Macedonian and even of the Roman occupation. With that picture compare the following of the Egypt of to-day. "I have not been able to discover any trace whatever of Nationalism. Arabi did not attempt to appeal to any such sentiment; it would not have been understood. . . . I came out to Egypt sanguine as to the possibility of establishing representative institutions upon a popular basis, but a careful and anxious inquiry into the actual state of feeling, into the political elements, into the fitness of the great bulk of the people, and as to any wish that may exist among them to possess them, has satisfied me that an interval of reformed administration must elapse before such a change could be either prudently or successfully carried out."†

There is light beyond the darkness for Egypt. The Lord is smiting that He may heal. He has brought them low; He may yet bring them lower: for it

* *The Ancient Egyptians,* Vol. I., p. 310.

† *Egypt After the War,* pp. 298, 299.

stands written "They shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors." But He humbles that He may in due time exalt them. "He shall send them a Saviour and a defender, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day. . . . In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth: for that the Lord of hosts hath blessed them saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isaiah xix. 20-25).

But the point before us now is this. We have viewed in its length and breadth this prophetic picture of the Egypt of the present. We have tested it in its minute details. We have taken them one after another, five in the preceding chapter, ten in this. We have laid down each with the same feeling of astonishment. The fate of Egypt's two ancient capitals is described and discriminated. Thebes is to be "broken," to be "rent asunder." The idols of Memphis are to be destroyed, its images are to cease. And for nineteen centuries Thebes has continued in fragments, while Memphis has perished. The temples and images of Thebes remain; those of Memphis have disappeared. The earlier capital still attracts the traveller, and still affords a shelter to the children of the soil: the later capital has neither inhabitant nor memorial. And as it is with the capitals so it is with the country and the people. It was declared that from the time of the Babylonian conquest Egypt's story should be a story of decay; and from that time to the present hour the career of loss and degradation has continued. Notwithstanding all our own efforts as a nation it is not arrested even now. Egypt was still, however, to be preserved, to continue as a kingdom though the basest of the kingdoms of the earth. Her degradation was to be marked in another way: she was never again

to have a native ruler. A blight was also to settle upon the land. The rivers and the canals were to be dried up. The papyrus reeds and the verdure of the river banks were to be swept away. The fisheries, one of the chief sources of the people's food, were to fail; the industries, which were Egypt's glory and the fountain of her wealth, were to perish. She herself was to be a desolation in the midst of desolations, and her cities were to be in the midst of cities that are wasted. The instruments of her degradation and her misery were described. She was to be the prey of a rapacious, cruel, and foreign mastery. She was to be sold into the hand of the wicked: the land and all that is therein was to be made waste by strangers. Whose eye saw these things? Whose word declared them? One prediction might have been fulfilled by some happy chance, and, perhaps, a second; but what of all these? Can the thought that their fulfilment is due to accident be entertained for a moment? And if not, whose is the Book on which this seal is set? Is it man's Book? Or is it His "in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways"?

CHAPTER VI.

IDUMEA AND THE SEA COAST OF PALESTINE.

The seeker after certainty in religion will be grateful for the multiplicity, as well as for the minuteness and distinctness, of Scripture prophecy. One or two lights in a chamber may not entirely sweep away its gloom. But the remedy is simple. The lights have only to be multiplied and the place will at last be brighter than the day could make it. When the first of those proofs from fulfilled prophecy are read, the darkness of the heart, though smitten, may not be dispersed. The very marvelousness of the evidence awakens suspicion. It seems too wonderful, it appears to give too ready and too full a satisfaction, to be true. The whisper may be heard, when the first cry of wonder has died away, that we are mistaking for design what is after all the work of chance; or that what has astonished us is an enthusiastic reading of the words of Scripture, which sober inspection will not confirm. The best answer to all this is to show how wide is the field which the fulfilments of prophecy cover; and that the soberest investigation cannot be blind to the fact that the pages of Scripture are studded with predictions, as the heaven with stars, or the earth with flowers—predictions that have been, and are being, slowly but surely fulfilled. The remedy here, too, is to multiply the lights till in the

brightening splendour no room is left for the shadow of doubt.

We have already noticed the prediction regarding Egypt that it should "be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate." On the west, and on the south we have seen how fully the prophecy has been fulfilled. Let us now turn to the only other side on which Egypt was bounded by other lands. Travelling eastward from Egypt, and crossing the desert of Sinai, we come to what was the ancient Idumea, or Edom, the possession of the children of Esau. The wilderness is bounded on the east by the *Wadi Arabah,* a long and wide valley which extends from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akabah, and on the eastern side of that valley rises like a mighty wall the mountain range of Seir. The Edomites and the Israelites had sprung from the same stock, the one being the descendants of Esau, the other the children of Jacob. The latter were not permitted to forget the claims of brotherhood, being forbidden to dispossess either the Edomites or the Moabites. But, from the time the Israelites sought a passage to the land promised to their fathers, till Jerusalem was laid in ashes and Judah was carried captive to Babylon, there was neither goodwill nor peace between these common descendants of Abraham. "Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and our fathers: and when we cried unto the Lord, He heard our voice, and sent an angel, and brought us forth out of Egypt; and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border: let us pass, I pray thee, through thy land" (Num. xx. 14-17).

To this appeal the only answer was a drawn

sword. The Edomites massed their forces on their western frontier, and the Israelites were compelled to choose another way. The enmity did not end there. Edom watched his opportunity, and, springing from his mountain lair, again and again drank blood. When Israel was weak and oppressed, it could always reckon that in him it had one foe more. "He did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever" (Amos i. 11). In that last sore distress Judah had no more bitter and insulting foe than Edom. The Psalmist cries, "Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom, the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Ps. cxxxvii. 7). For the man who is deaf to the pleadings of brotherhood and of pity the Scripture has its threatenings. It has also its judgments for nations. "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, O mount Seir. . . . because thou hast had a perpetual enmity, and hast given over the children of Israel to the power of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time of the iniquity of the end: therefore as I live, saith the Lord God, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee. . . Thus will I make mount Seir an astonishment and a desolation; and I will cut off from it him that passeth through and him that returneth" (Ezek. xxxv. 3-7).

In this and other predictions we are presented with another prophetic picture. No forecast could have been made whose fulfilment seemed less likely. When the words were penned, and for ages afterwards, Edom was strong and populous. The number of ruined towns and cities show that the land was thickly peopled; while there are numerous indications, both in the vestiges of ancient cultivation and in the present condition of the soil, that the

language of Scripture has not exaggerated its great fertility. "The whole of the fine plains in this quarter" (the neighbourhood of Kerak) "are covered with sites of towns on every eminence or spot convenient for the construction of one, and all the land is capable of rich cultivation: there can be little doubt that this country, now so deserted, once presented a continued picture of plenty and fertility."* Wherever springs "are met with," says Burckhardt, "vegetation readily takes place, even among barren sand and rocks." He speaks in warm terms of the superiority of the climate, of the purity of the air, and the refreshing breezes, and remarks that in no other part of Syria had he met so few invalids. Speaking of the plains at the foot of mount Hor Dean Stanley says: "Instead of the absolute nakedness of the Sinaitic valleys, we found ourselves walking on grass sprinkled with flowers, and the level platforms on each side were filled with sprouting corn."† Petra, the great rock city, the Selah of the Scripture (2 Kings xiv. 7), and the capital of Edom, was a place of immense strength, and one of the wonders of the world. The country was enriched by the gains of a large and lucrative trade. To Petra the caravans from the east and the south turned as to a common centre; and from it the trade branched out again to Egypt, Palestine and Syria. In the time of our Lord, Idumea was still populous, and these prophecies were unfulfilled. Judgments had indeed fallen upon the land. It stood written in Ezekiel: "I will lay My vengeance upon Edom by the hand of My people Israel; and they shall do in Edom according to Mine anger and according to My fury." The words were fulfilled in the time of the Maccabees. They were conquered by Hyrcanus in 129 B. C., and being compelled either to adopt the Jewish religion

* Irby and Mangles. † *Syria and Palestine*, p. 87.

or to leave the country, they chose rather to part with their idolatry. But the sun of Edom did not go down at once in blood and darkness. Herod, an Idumean by descent, sat upon the throne of Israel. When the Roman armies were closing around Jerusalem, an Idumean army threw itself into the devoted city, and shared with the Jews the toils and the sufferings of that terrible siege. The prosperity of Petra, and of Edom generally, continued long after Zion's fall. From the fourth to the sixth century Petra was the seat of one of the three metropolitan sees of Palestine, and the names of its bishops appear from time to time in the records of the Councils. An Arab host was led by Mohammed in person against the south of Idumea in 630. In 636 it was conquered, along with the rest of Syria, by the Mohammedan forces. With this last notice Edom, even then fertile and populous, passes from the page of history for more than four and a half centuries. The Crusaders invaded the country in 1100, but were finally driven out before the end of the twelfth century. And then the curtain, raised as it were for a moment, fell again only to be drawn aside in what we may name our own times.

Let us now return to the picture presented in the mirror of prophecy. We notice first of all that

ITS COMMERCE WAS TO CEASE.

"I will cut off from it him that passeth through, and him that returneth" (Ezek. xxxv. 7). It was famed, as we have seen, for its trade. Petra was the terminus, Strabo tells us, of one of the great commercial routes of Asia. It was the market of the Arabians for their spice and frankincense. A great fair was held in its neighbourhood, which on one occasion Demetrius Poliorcetes, incited by the value of the merchandise brought together for sale, attempted to surprise, but failed. Such was the Edom, not only of the prophet's day,

but of the first ages of the Christian era. And now that the curtain is lifted there is no more awful testimony to the sureness of God's word than this land presents. The desolation is appalling. Its commerce has utterly passed away. We do not know the story, but the great market of Petra has long since ceased to exist. Edom is no longer sought by those who desire to sell or by those who desire to buy. None go forth from it laden with the merchandise which once made its name famous in the earth. No echo of its once noisy traffic breaks the brooding silence of death. "Him that passeth through and him that returneth" God's hand has alike "cut off."

Another prophecy declared that

THE RACE OF THE EDOMITES SHOULD BECOME EXTINCT.

"There shall not be any remaining to the house of Esau" (Obadiah, 18). That they were not extinct in the year 70 of our era we know, for they made common cause with their Jewish kindred in the defence of Jerusalem. They were afterwards Christianised with the Christianity characteristic of the Greek Empire, and which received its fitting judgment at the hands of the Arab hordes. With the Mohammedan invasion the Idumeans pass from sight, and now, when we search for them, they cannot be found. The doom has fallen; the nation is extinct; there is "none remaining to the house of Esau." Dr. Wilson found among the Arabs a tribe (the fellahin of the Wadi Musa),* whom he suspected to be descendants of the ancient masters of the country. He learned, on inquiry, that they claimed indeed to be descendants of the Beni-Israel, that is, of Jewish settlers or refugees; but no mention was made of any connection with Esau. The very name has been forgotten.

* *The Lands of the Bible,* I., p. 333.

Then we are told that

THEIR LAND WAS TO BE A DESOLATION.

"Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I am against thee, O mount Seir, and I will stretch out Mine hand against thee, and I will make thee a desolation and an astonishment. I will lay thy cities waste and thou shall be desolate. . . . Thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Edom, even all of it" (Ezek. xxxv. 3, 4, 15). This doom too has been accomplished. Volney was the first to call attention to the country, recording the information given him by Arabs, that within three days' journey upwards of thirty ruined towns, absolutely deserted, were to be met with. It was first explored by Burckhardt, and since his time many travellers have made us familiar with the wonders of Petra and the general aspect of Edom. Its cities are laid waste. Even from Petra with its rock-hewn dwellings, fit, as Miss Martineau has said, to receive a multitude to-day, every inhabitant has long since departed. And the entire land is now, as it has been for ages, a desolation. Here and there a cultivated patch is seen, sown by the Bedouin; but as a solitary cry in its desert silence makes the awful stillness more deeply felt, so those few green spots oppress the heart with a deeper sense of the terribleness of Edom's judgment. The terraces, which of old clad the mountain sides with beauty and fruitfulness, are in ruins. Their walls lie scattered in fragments upon the ground, and the rains are year by year washing down the remnants of the soil from the rocks. The town of Maan, on the east of Edom, alone has escaped the general desolation. It owes its exemption to the possession of some springs, and to its lying upon the route of the Mohammedan pilgrimage to Mecca. This Maan is the Theman mentioned by Eusebius, and the Teman of Scripture. Can any one fail to be struck with the coincidence that it was from this point the desolation

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was to begin, and, as it were, overflow the entire land? The prophet wrote as the word of the living God, "I will make it desolate from Teman" (Ezek. xxv. 13); and in the end of days come like an answering testimony these words of Burckhardt: "At present all this country is a desert, and Maan is the only inhabited place in it!"

Edom has not yet touched its lowest depth. Not only is it written, "I will make thee perpetual desolations and thy cities shall not be inhabited" (Ezek. xxxv. 9), and that "from generation to generation it shall lie waste, none shall pass through it for ever and ever" (Isaiah xxxiv. 10); but it has also been said, "As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall dwell there, neither shall any son of man sojourn there." These last words are not yet fulfilled. The solitude is broken here and there by fellaheen in the north and by Arabs in the south. But her deserted capital, her ruined cities, her lost people, are the pledge that these words too will find their fulfilment, and that the time will surely come when no man shall dwell there nor any son of man sojourn therein.

Let us now pass from Idumea to the southern part of the sea-coast of Palestine, the ancient land of the Philistines. The scanty notices of this people, supplied by ancient history and the recently deciphered monuments of Egypt and Assyria, agree with those of Scripture in representing them as an enterprising and martial race. More than 1,200 years before the Christian era we find them engaged in a successful war with the Sidonians, and about the same time they, in conjunction with other Mediterranean nations, attacked the naval forces of Egypt. Every reader of the Old Testament is acquainted with their persistent hostility towards the Israelites, a hostility which seems to have culminated in the hour of Israel's deepest distress, when her armies were defeated and dispersed, her

strongholds taken, and the majority of her people carried captive to Babylonia. When the doom was pronounced against Edom, Philistia was not forgotten. "Thus saith the Lord God: Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and taken vengeance with despite of soul to destroy it with perpetual enmity; therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites, and destroy the remnant of the sea-coast" (Ezek. xxv. 15, 16); "Gather yourselves together, yea gather together O nation that hath no shame. . . . Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea-coast, the nation of the Cherethites! The word of the Lord is against you, O Canaan, the land of the Philistines: I will destroy thee that there shall be no inhabitant. And the sea-coast shall be pastures, with cottages for shepherds and folds for flocks" (Zephaniah ii. 1, 5, 6).

Let us look, then, at this other picture drawn by the pen of prophecy. We note first of all that upon this race, which like that of Esau sought to blot out Israel, there also rests

THE DOOM OF EXTINCTION.

The Cherethites were to be cut off, and even the remnant of the sea-coast was to be destroyed. In the face of the desolation which has descended on all these lands, it may seem as if there was nothing wonderful in this prediction. We may regard it as an inevitable feature in their decay that their ancient peoples should pass away and leave no trace. But their kindred, the Egyptians, have not perished, nor have the Israelites, though bereft of a home for eighteen centuries, ceased to exist. Even the Amorites, more ancient foes of Israel, have descendants who can still be distinguished among the Arabs of Mount Seir. The Philistines—so powerful of old that the Greeks have applied their name to the whole country and called it Palestine—the land of the Philistines—these might also have endured

either in Philistia or elsewhere. But its plains will be searched in vain for the descendants of its ancient and war-like masters. Their merchantmen no longer plough the sea or crowd their ports. No more do the hosts sweep out from under the frowning battlements of their own mighty cities to defend the land, or to carry fire and sword into the country of the foe. The strife, which of old stained with blood those hills and plains, still adds to their misery; but none of that once proud and mighty race have part in it, nor are there any, however lowly, who, there or elsewhere, bear their name. The Cherethites have been cut off: the remnant of the sea-coast has perished.

Then this land also was to be

A DESOLATION.

It extended from Jaffa to Gaza, being bounded on the north by the plain of Sharon, on the west by the Mediterranean, on the south by the desert, and on the east by the hills of Judah. It contained the five great cities of Ekron, Ashdod, Ascalon, Gath, and Gaza. We find the names of its strong cities appearing in the stories inscribed on the monuments which tell of the Assyrian and Egyptian invasions of Syria. Ashdod defied the might of Egypt for 29 years—the longest siege on record. Though one wave after another had passed over Philistia, as over the rest of Syria—though Persian, and Egyptian, and Greek, and Roman had wasted with fire and sword, the country remained great and populous, and still possessed her great cities long after the beginning of the Christian era. Even in the twelfth century the word was still unfulfilled. The country was then full of strong cities which were taken and retaken during the wars of the crusades. But during the last six centuries the judgment has slowly but surely fallen; it is deepening even now. "Gath has entirely disappeared." Ascalon is now "without inhabitant." "Akir," the ancient Ekron, "is

a wretched village, containing some 40 or 50 mud hovels; its narrow lanes are encumbered with heaps of rubbish and filth. It stands on a bare slope, and the ground immediately around it has a dreary and desolate look, heightened by a few stunted trees here and there round the houses. Yet this is all that marks the site and bears the name of the royal city of Ekron."* Gaza, not *the* Gaza of the Philistines as we shall afterwards see, is still the seat of a considerable population. It forms the first resting-place on the caravan route from Egypt, and has about 15,000 inhabitants. But notwithstanding its position it has hardly retained the shadow of its ancient strength and greatness. "The town resembles a cluster of large villages. The principal one stands on the top of a low hill, and the others lie on the plain at its base. The hill appears to be composed, in a great measure, of the accumulated ruins of successive cities. We can see portions of massive walls and the ends of old columns cropping up everywhere from the rubbish. There are no walls or defences of any kind."† The once mighty Ashdod is a village "wretched in the extreme." "The temples, palaces, and houses are all gone." "All that is left is a confused group of mud hovels."‡

Nor is it that the population of the country has merely changed its dwelling-places. With the exceptions named and a few more it has ceased to exist. "Along the whole sea-board are white, sandy downs. Within these is the broad undulating plain with its rich deep soil and low mounds at intervals over whose summits the grey ruins of great cities are now strewn in the dust. . . . Ruins were visible everywhere; but the villages were few, small, and far between."|| The depopulation of the

* J. L. Porter; *Giant Cities of Bashan and Syria's Holy Places*, p. 191.

† *Ibid.*, p. 204. ‡ *Ibid.* || *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 190.

country is largely due to "the insecurity of these parts at the present day from the unchecked incursions of the Bedouin tribes."* Many of the people whose fields are on the plains of Philistia, have, for security, fixed their dwellings on the hillsides of Judah. The word, in short, has been fulfilled, which said, "O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will destroy thee that there shall be no inhabitant" (Zephaniah ii. 5). The population, which even now could be sustained by its exuberant fertility, has long since passed away. No invading host need dread the resistance of Philistia. It has ceased to defend itself even from the inroads of the robbers of the desert.

But it will be said the words "there shall be no inhabitant" are not literally fulfilled, and the present condition of the country sprinkled as it is with its miserable villages does not answer to the picture which is mirrored in the prophecy. This seeming difficulty, however, only brings out the more the wonderful accuracy with which the present condition of Philistia was portrayed. Philistia as it then was, a land of great cities, famed for its wealth and splendour, its wisdom and martial prowess, its armies and navies, its nobles and warriors, its merchants and artificers, was to be destroyed. And all *have* passed away. We look in vain for the Philistia of the past. Some ruins of its cities remain, but not a vestige of what was once its strength and glory can now be found. Yet, though the land was to be bereft of those inhabitants, it was not to be tenantless. The prophecy reads, "I will destroy thee that there shall be no inhabitant. *And the sea-coast shall be pastures, with cottages for shepherds and folds for flocks*" (Zeph. ii. 5, 6).

The former life was to be replaced by this. And here our attention is called to two other predictions. Though the aspect of the country was to be changed,

* Stanley; *Syria and Palestine*, p. 259.

ITS FRUITFULNESS WAS TO REMAIN.

"The sea-coast shall be for pastures." It is to attract and sustain its new possessors. This is perhaps the most striking feature of the country. One traveller calls it "the garden of Palestine."* All travellers speak of its rich corn fields. "The most striking and characteristic feature of Philistia," says Stanley, "is its immense plain of corn fields, stretching from the edge of the sandy tract right up to the very wall of the hills of Judah, which look down its whole length from north to south. These rich fields must have been the great source at once of the power and the wealth of Philistia, and of the unceasing efforts of Israel to master the territory. It was in fact a little Egypt. . . . . As these plains form the point of junction and contrast with the hills of Judah on the west, so they form a point of junction and similarity with the wide pastures of the desert on the south."† The "plain," says another, "now opened up before us, rolling away to the southern horizon in graceful undulations, clothed with a rich mantle of green and gold—harvest field and pasture land. . . . The plain was all astir with bands of reapers, men and women. . . . Leaving this low-lying plain we ascended the bleak downs where vast flocks of sheep and camels were browsing; and away on our left, nearly a mile distant, we saw the black tents of their Arab owners." He speaks of "the noble plain" in the neighbourhood of the ancient Ashdod, "stretching away to the foot of Judah's mountains, here and there cultivated, but mostly neglected and desolate, yet all naturally rich as in the palmiest days of Philistia's power."‡

The fertility of the land, therefore, remains, and the words which describe

* Porter: *Giant Cities of Bashan,* &c., † *Syria and Palestine,* pp. 258, 259.

‡ Porter; *Giant Cities of Bashan,* &c., pp. 190-195.

are also fulfilled. The sea-coast has literally become "pastures and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks." Volney thus describes the country as he found it in 1785:—"In the plain between Ramla and Gaza we met with a number of villages badly built of dried mud, and which, like the inhabitants, exhibit every mark of poverty and wretchedness. The houses, on a nearer view, *are only so many huts,* sometimes detached, at others ranged in the form of cells, around a courtyard enclosed by a mud wall. In winter they and their cattle may be said to live together, the part of the dwelling allotted to themselves being only raised about two feet above that in which they lodge their beasts. Except the environs of these villages, all the rest of the country is a desert, and abandoned to the Bedouin Arabs, who feed their flocks on it." What the country then was it still remains. Dr. Thomson gives the following graphic description of a large village in one of the most flourishing districts. After riding for nearly two hours "through an ocean of ripe wheat," he came to Mesmia just as the sun set. "There I pitched for the night. It is a large agricultural village, *mud hovels packed together like stacks in a barn-yard,* and nearly concealed *by vast mounds of manure on all sides of it.* During the night a dense fog settled down flat upon the face of the plain, through which you could not see ten steps, and the scene in the morning was extraordinary and highly exciting. Before it was light the village was all *abuzz* like a bee-hive. Forth issued party after party driving camels, horses, mules, donkeys, cows, sheep, goats, and even poultry before them. To everybody and thing there was a separate call, and the roar and uproar was prodigious."* Referring to the Temple of

* *The Land and the Book,* I., p. 161.

Dagon, one of the glories of ancient Ashdod, Porter says: "Not a vestige of the temple is there now. Along the southerly declivity old building stones with fragments of columns and sculptured capitals are piled up in the fences of little fields, and in the walls of goat and sheep pens, showing how time and God's unchangeableness have converted prophecy into history: 'and the sea-coast shall be dwellings, and cottages for shepherds and *folds for flocks.*'"*

We may notice in connection with this country some startling instances of the minute fulfilment of prophecy. They are presented in the diverse fates of three of its great cities. The prophet Zechariah declares, "Ashkelon shall not be inhabited" (ix. 5); and Zephaniah, "Ashkelon" shall be "a desolation" (ii. 4). The latter prophet immediately after the prediction we have just noticed, continues: "And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed their flocks thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity." It would seem, therefore, that though the inhabitant should cease from Ascalon, the place should remain even till the ingathering of Israel. What, then, is the fact? Till nearly the end of the thirteenth century Ascalon retained its strength and greatness, when its fortifications were demolished by the Sultan Bibars, and its harbour was filled up with stones. The walls present evidence of their having been rebuilt, and it was held by a Turkish garrison so late as the beginning of the seventeenth century. Since that time it has been totally deserted. The modern village is to the north of the old site, and not even those who own orchards within the walls plant their dwellings there. The walls of the town, with their ruined towers and battlements, still remain, and in this respect Ascalon stands alone

* *Giant Cities of Bashan,* &c., p. 195.

among the ancient cities of Philistia. "The topography of this place," writes Dr. Thomson, "is very peculiar. A lofty and abrupt ridge begins near the shore, runs up eastward, bends round to the south, then to the west, and finally north-west to the sea again, forming an irregular amphitheatre. On the top of this ridge ran the wall, which was defended at its salient angles by strong towers. The specimens which still exist show that it was very high and thick. . . . The position is one of the fairest along this part of the Mediterranean coast. . . . The walls must have been blown to pieces by powder, for not even earthquakes could toss these gigantic masses of masonry into such extraordinary attitudes. No site in this country has so deeply impressed my mind with sadness."* Ascalon is a desolation, but it waits to render a final service. Ibrahim Pasha in 1840 cleared part of the ruins to bivouac the Egyptian troops, and in so doing uncovered no fewer than 20 wells of water. The cleared space has since been occupied as gardens, and Dr. Thomson says: "Ashkelon will surely be rebuilt at some future day of prosperity for this unhappy land. The position is altogether too advantageous to allow it to sink into total neglect."†

In the same prediction of Zephaniah we read: "Ekron" (more correctly Akkaron) "shall be ROOTED UP" (ii. 4). The words are unusual and striking, yet few would think of laying special stress upon them. Let the event instruct us. The site is still called *Akir,* and there still remain upon it a few inhabitants. But round the small village no mounds are seen such as mark the sites of other ancient cities. *Ekron has literally been rooted up.* The place where it once stood is now ploughed fields, and the only evidence that a city ever existed there is found in the stones of hand-mills and the ancient cisterns which are occasionally met with by the cultivators.

* *The Land and the Book,* pp. 545, 546. † *Ibid.,* p. 546.

It is also said in Zephaniah, "Gaza shall be forsaken" (ii. 4); and in Jeremiah, "Baldness is come upon Gaza" (xlvii. 5). There is still a town of this name, as we have seen, which has at present a population of about fifteen thousand. Dr. Keith, in the earlier editions of his large and valuable work on Prophecy, found this a difficulty. It seemed plain that either the time had not yet come for the fulfilment of the predictions, or that the language of the prophets was not to be taken quite literally, and that the once great city of Gaza might be regarded as offering in its present fallen condition a comparatively close fulfilment. But meanwhile the prophecies had been so fully accomplished that the ancient Gaza could lift no protest against the mistake which was being made. The modern town is not built, as Dr. Keith afterwards discovered, on the site of the old, and is therefore not the subject of the prophecies. The great Gaza of the Philistines lay two miles nearer the shore, and is now a series of sand-hills, covered with minute but manifold remains. It is so forsaken that there is not a single hut resting upon its site. It is so bald that neither pillar nor standing stone marks the place where the city stood, nor is there a single blade of grass on which the weary eye can rest.

Every one will feel how startlingly clear and minute these prophetic pictures are. Were they mere descriptions we should admire their accuracy and happy fitness of expression. But our wonder is intensified as we mark how accurately the fate of those three allied cities is discriminated. The description of Ascalon, desolate and tenantless, awaiting a day of restoration when it may receive wanderers to its shelter, can be applied to neither Ekron nor Gaza. Gaza though forsaken and bald, has not been rooted up. Its mounds remain, bald though they are; their stones are sometimes quarried to meet the wants of the neighbouring town, and it is possible that the foundations of the

ancient city may yet be laid bare. Only to Ekron does that briefest but truest of all possible descriptions apply—it alone has been "rooted up." The traveller who would to-day apply these words for the first time, we should judge to be possessed of clear observation, and of that rarer penetration and sympathy of genius which grasp to its inmost depths the thing with which they deal. Add to this, what we know, that the words stood upon the page of Scripture for long centuries before any sign appeared of their fulfilment, and then say what we are to think of such things. Very high claims have been made on behalf of the Scriptures; but if we test them by these three words, we think the highest claim of all will be amply sustained.

CHAPTER VII.

JUDEA AND BABYLON.

From the sea-coast of Palestine we now pass over to the land of Israel. We have some remarkable prophecies regarding Judea, as well as regarding the Jews, in the Books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. They are predictions the fulfilment of which was to be contingent on the prolonged disobedience, the persistent rebellion, of the Israelites. After having spoken of milder chastisements the Scripture proceeds: "And if ye will not for all this hearken unto Me, but walk contrary unto Me, then I will walk contrary unto you in fury, and I will also chastise you seven times for your sins. . . . And I will destroy your high places. . . . And I will make your cities a waste, and will bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours, and I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And you, will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation and your cities shall be a waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate and ye be in your enemies' land, even then shall the land have rest and enjoy her sabbaths" (Levit. xxvi. 27-34).

These words were written before the Israelites entered Palestine. There were partial and temporary ful-

filments before the Christian era, such as the removal to Babylon, from the consideration of which we are precluded by the limits which we have assigned ourselves. But if these words ever were to be fulfilled they ought to be fulfilled now. They are a statement of what God is to do in the event of Israel's stubborn resistance to His will. Their continued unbelief, their persistent disobedience, are to be followed by these judgments which are to mark them as the objects of God's displeasure. Now, if Christianity is of God and these words are His, *this* must be beyond every other, the time of their fulfilment. For if Christ is indeed the Saviour promised from of old and the King whom God has anointed over Zion, then there is nothing which Israel has ever done which has equalled the rebellion of these nearly 19 centuries. It has been high-handed and utter. There has not been the slightest attempt, or pretence of an attempt, even to make a compromise. They have wholly rejected God's covenant. For that covenant, as made with Abraham, spoke of Him in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed. When it was reinstituted under Moses, it made mention of the Prophet like unto him. When the one King of God's appointment was set over Israel, they were pointed to David's son, whose sceptre should rule the nations and whose dominion should be everlasting; and this Anointed One was ever more clearly set forth by the prophets who, according to the Jews' own admission, were the inspired exponents of the Divine will. And yet, when He came, they said "we will not have this man to reign over us." They crucified Him. They blasphemed His name. They persecuted His followers. They tried to stamp out the acknowledgment, and even the remembrance, of Him, from the earth. And to-day, though powerless—we may also say unwishful—to injure Christianity, their rejection of it is still sullen and contemptuous. If, in the face of all this, nothing which the servant of

God spoke of had been done, I can conceive of no stronger argument against Christianity than those very words of his would supply. It would then be clearly proved either that the words were not true, or that, in rejecting Christ, the Jews were not rejecting anything which could be called the covenant, or the will, of God. But if, on the other hand, the words have all been fulfilled to the letter, are not both claims fully proved? If the punishment has been contemporaneous with the rebellion; if the punishment has been as prolonged as the rebellion has been enduring; what then? Shall we not read there that these *are* God's words and that Jesus *is* God's gift to us?

Let us see, then, whether the prophecy has been made good. We confine ourselves at present to what is said of *the land*—the story of the people will come before us again. We notice first of all that there was to be

A CESSATION OF JEWISH WORSHIP AND THE DESOLATION OF THEIR SANCTUARIES.

"I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours," "I will destroy your high places . . . and will bring your sanctuaries unto desolation" (Levit. xxvi. 30, 31). We know what Jewish worship was in the time of our Lord. The prescribed service of the law was celebrated with pomp and splendour by a fully equipped and richly-sustained priesthood. The temple tax of two drachmæ was paid not only by the Jews in Judea and Galilee. Wherever the Jew was found throughout the known world the tax was collected and forwarded to Jerusalem. The Temple itself was one of the wonders of the world. "High above the whole city rose the Temple, uniting the commanding strength of a citadel with the splendour of a sacred edifice. According to Josephus the esplanade on which it stood had been considerably enlarged by the accumulation of fresh soil since the days of Solomon, particularly on

the north side. It now covered a square of a furlong each side."* Of the internal splendours of the edifice, the beauty and magnificence of the colonnades and courts and gates, we need not speak. "The outward face of the Temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes, for at the first rising of the sun it reflected back a very fiery splendour, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it, to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. It appeared to strangers when they were at a distance like a mountain covered with snow, for those parts of it that were not covered with gold were exceeding white." "Vast and splendid," says Hosmer, "the Temple certainly was. The Romans were then at the height of power, and familiar with all the magnificence of the earth, yet it seemed to them one of the wonders of the world. No doubt it far surpassed in greatness and beauty the structure of Solomon, upon whose foundations it was reared. The Herods had lavished upon it vast treasures."†

Such then was the worship, and the "Holy Place" of the Jew at the time of our Lord. But, as we have seen, it stood written from the time they passed out of Egypt that, if they consummated their sin and completed their rebellion by the rejection of God's covenant, their Holy Places would be brought into desolation and their worship should cease. About the year 26 of our era Jesus, the Messiah, was manifested. After three-and-a-half years of opposition and persecution the Roman Governor was compelled by the Jewish Rulers to do their will, and Jesus was crucified. Then the Gospel of a crucified and risen Redeemer was preached. And now in their turn the heralds of the Cross were rejected, maligned, imprisoned, scourged, and slain. Then in the year 70 the blow fell. The Roman armies swept

* Milman, *History of the Jews,* II., p. 331.
† *The Jews,* p. 104.

the land with fire and sword, the bitter opposition they met with fanning their rage to tenfold fierceness. The priesthood perished. The Holy Places were literally brought into desolation. The Temple was burned and ruthlessly demolished. Jerusalem was dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus, and the figure of a sow was placed over the gate leading to Bethlehem, so that under its polluting shadow no Jew might pass. Never since then has the Jew offered a single sacrifice prescribed by the Law. From that day to this the multitudes who from every quarter under heaven went up to keep holy-day have ceased. To this hour the doom of desolation remains, and these 18 centuries are the witnesses to the truth of the words, "I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. I will destroy your high places . . . and will bring your sanctuaries into desolation."

But terrible as this punishment was, there were to be still other tokens of the Divine displeasure.

THE ISRAELITES WERE TO BE DRIVEN FROM THEIR LAND.

"You, will I scatter among the nations" (Levit. xxvi. 33). Men were to say of them, "The Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land as at this day" (Deut. xxix. 28). The dispersion of the Jews is one of the common-places of history. Their story is one more proof how *the words* of Scripture are filled to the brim, so to speak, with meaning. Not only was the race cut down like a tree and its branches scattered abroad: it was literally "rooted out." The work was not wholly done in the first conquest under Vespasian and Titus, when Jerusalem was taken, and one stronghold after another went down, and all resistance was trampled under foot. It is true that multitudes perished then, and that many more were carried away to be slain in Roman amphitheatres or to spend

their lives in slavery. But it would appear that many of the dwellers in the villages and in the cities were allowed to remain in the land. It was not till 60 years afterwards (135 A. D.) that the ruin of the people was completed. A false Messiah, named Barcochebas (the son of a star), inflamed their desire for vengeance, and their hope that God would regard them in their misery. The remnant left in the land was now strong enough to garrison 50 castles and 985 villages. Their first efforts seem to have been attended with success. The Romans were defeated, and Julius Severus, the most distinguished general of the time, was summoned from Britain to take command of the Roman forces. The suppression of the rebellion was a work of time and skill, and was attended with losses so severe that that war was ever afterwards remembered as one of the most disastrous in which the Romans had ever engaged. Terrible stories are told by the Rabbins of the carnage which marked the final triumph of Rome, and a Roman historian records that during the war 580,000 fell by the sword, not including those who perished by famine, disease, or fire. The people who remained were gathered together in droves, driven to markets, and sold as slaves. The land was wholly depopulated: the people were "rooted out," and have never been planted again in the land promised to their fathers. Nearly 6,000 are found in Jerusalem, and about 5,000 in other parts of their ancient territory. That the Jews will eventually return to Palestine, we know. The fulfilment of the predictions which foretold judgment are the pledge that those also will be accomplished which promise mercy. But meanwhile the doom remains. Rabbinowitz, who went in 1882 to Palestine with the view of determining whether the "tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast" might not find a refuge in their ancient home, had to abandon the idea. He was compelled to admit that the poverty of the soil and the

oppression of the Turkish government make return an impossibility.

But, though deprived of her ancient masters, the land was not to be without inhabitant.

THEIR ENEMIES WERE TO DWELL IN IT.

"I will bring the land into desolation, and *your enemies who dwell therein* shall be astonished at it" (Levit. xxvi. 32). The Israelites were to be rooted out, but others were to be planted in their stead. And the words were fulfilled. After the suppression of the outbreak in 135 A.D., the whole of the land was put up to sale by command of the Emperor Hadrian, and was bought by Gentiles, who flocked in to settle in the country from which the Jews had been swept out. From that time to this their enemies have dwelt therein. The races who originally purchased the land have long ago been supplanted by others, but all have been alike in this that they were and are aliens and hostile to the Jew.

Then

THE CITIES WERE TO BE A WASTE.

This was largely fulfilled in 70, and still more fully in 135. We are told that then "the whole of Judea was a desert: wolves and hyenas went howling along the streets of the desolate cities." It might be supposed, however, that, if the preceding prediction were fulfilled and the land were inhabited by the enemies of the Jews, this desolation could not be a permanent feature of the country. And yet this was to be one of the enduring marks of the Divine indignation—"Your cities shall be a waste" (Levit. xxvi. 33). For a time the doom seemed to be successfully withstood. The fulfilment of the one prophecy appeared to prevent the fulfilment of the other. The ruined cities were peopled and re-built by the new settlers. And, when Christianity had triumphed in its long warfare

with the heathenism of the Roman Empire, and Constantine sat upon the throne of the Cæsars, Palestine was made to feel the change. Magnificent churches were reared on every spot hallowed by Old or New Testament story. It became a holy land to the whole Roman Empire. When the Persians under Chosroes II. invaded the country in the beginning of the seventh century, Galilee and the district on the other side of the Jordan were so full of strong cities that the progress of the Persian hosts was seriously delayed. A few years afterwards the Arab invaders were occupied four months in the siege of Jerusalem, and the siege then ended only because the Christians capitulated upon their own terms. Four centuries later the Crusaders found Palestine still possessed of strong cities —so long did the word of God wait, or rather so slow are the harvests of judgment. But the word did not wait in vain. The threat, "Your cities shall be a waste," has long since been abundantly fulfilled. Travellers speak of its desolation with positive amazement. Captain Conder refers to Judea as "this ruined land."* Of the Shephelah, or western lowlands, the most fertile and thickly populated district of the land of Israel, he says: "The ruins are so thickly spread over hill and valley that in some parts there are as many as three ancient sites to two square miles."† Dean Stanley speaks of "the countless ruins of Palestine."‡ He elsewhere draws attention to the "peculiarity of the present aspect of Palestine, which though not, properly speaking, a physical feature, is so closely connected both with its outward imagery and with its general situation that it cannot be omitted. Above all other countries in the world it is a *Land of Ruins.*"|| "It is not that the particular ruins are on a scale equal to

* *Tent Work in Palestine,* p. 7. † *Ibid.,* p. 2.

‡ *Syria and Palestine,* p. 119. || The Italics and Capitals are the Dean's.

those of Greece or Italy, still less to those of Egypt. But there is no country in which they are so numerous, none in which they bear so large a proportion to the villages and towns still in existence. In Judea it is hardly an exaggeration to say that whilst for miles and miles there is no appearance of present life or habitation, except the occasional goat-herd on the hill-side, or gathering of women at the wells, there is yet hardly a hill-top of the many within sight which is not covered by the vestiges of some fortress or city of former ages. Sometimes they are fragments of ancient walls, sometimes mere foundations and piles of stone, but always enough to indicate signs of human habitation and civilisation."* Of Jerusalem, which, according to another prediction, has continued from generation to generation, this is nevertheless also true. The chief of Israel's cities has not escaped the general doom. Dean Stanley says: "If, as we have before observed, Palestine is a land of ruins, still more emphatically may it be said that Jerusalem is a city of ruins. Here and there a regular street, or a well-built European house emerges from the general crash, but the general appearance is that of a city which has been burnt down in some great conflagration." †

We have now to mark a kindred feature in the prophetic picture.

THE LAND WAS ALSO TO BE DESOLATE.

Here, again, it might be supposed that the possession of the country by the enemies of the Jews would have made the accomplishment of the prophecy impossible. If industrious settlers took the place of those whom God had swept away, why should not the land have remained as fertile and populous under them as under their predecessors? There is no doubt that for ages its fertility and populousness did remain. But it was

* *Ibid.*, p. 117. † *Ibid.*, p. 183.

written from of old that this should be another mark of God's displeasure against His people: "I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies who dwell therein shall be astonished at it. . . . Your land shall be a desolation. . . . Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest and enjoy her Sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall have rest; even the rest which it had not in your Sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it" (Levit. xxvi. 32-35).

The reiteration will be marked. The desolation of the land is as prominent a feature in the prophetic picture as the scattering of Israel among the nations. And this judgment too has fallen. Henry Maundrell, who visited the country in 1697, says: "All along this day's travel from Khan Leban to Beer, and also as far as we could see around, the country discovered a quite different face from what it had before, presenting nothing to the view, in most places, but bare rocks, mountains, and precipices. . . . Leaving Beer, we proceeded as before in a rude, stony country." I have already quoted the words of Dean Stanley, that "for miles and miles there is no appearance of present life or habitation, except the occasional goat-herd on the hill-side, or gathering of women at the wells." Elsewhere he speaks of "the present depressed and desolate state" of the land. To "the question which Eastern travellers so often ask and are asked, on their return, 'Can these stony, these deserted valleys, be indeed the Land of Promise, the land flowing with milk and honey?'" he quotes in answer the words of Dr. Olin: "The entire destruction of the woods which once covered the mountains, and the utter neglect of the terraces which supported the soil on steep declivities, have given full scope to the rains which have left many traces of bare rock where formerly were vineyards and cornfields." And he adds: "The very labour which was expended

on these sterile hills in former times has increased their present sterility. The natural vegetation has been swept away, and no human cultivation now occupies the terraces which once took the place of forests and pastures." * Speaking of the district about Lake Huleh, Mark Twain says: "Stirring scenes like these occur in this valley no more. There is not a solitary village throughout its whole extent—nor for thirty miles in either direction. There are two or three small clusters of Bedouin tents, but not a single permanent habitation. One may ride ten miles hereabouts and not see ten human beings. To this region one of the prophecies is applied. 'I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and I will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.' No man can stand here by deserted Ain Mellahah and say the prophecy has not been fulfilled." And again: "It is seven in the morning, and as we are in the country, the grass ought to be sparkling with dew, the flowers enriching the air with their fragrance, and the birds singing in the trees. But alas, there is no dew here, nor flowers, nor birds, nor trees. There is a plain and an unshaded lake, and beyond them some barren mountains."†

"The valley (of Shechem)," writes Captain Conder, "is the most luxuriant in Palestine. . . But as at Damascus the oasis is set in a desert, and the stony, barren mountains contrast strongly with the green orchards below."‡ The Rev. J. L. Porter says: "I climbed a peak which commands the lake, and the Jordan valley up to the waters of Merom. The principal scene of Christ's public labours lay around me—a re-

* *Syria and Palestine,* pp. 120, 121.

† *The New Pilgrim's Progress,* pp. 123, 124. ‡ *Tent Work in Palestine,* p. 7.

gion some thirty miles long by ten wide. When He had His home at Capernaum, the whole country was teeming with life, and bustle, and industry. No less than ten cities, with numerous villages, studded the shores of the lake, and the plains, and the hill-sides around. The water was all speckled with the dark boats and white sails of Galilee's fishermen. Eager multitudes followed the footsteps of Jesus through the city streets, over the flower-strewn fields, along the pebbly beach. What a woeful change has passed over the land since that time! The Angel of destruction has been there. From that commanding height, through the clear Syrian atmosphere, I was able to distinguish, by the aid of my glass, every spot in that wide region celebrated in sacred history or hallowed by sacred association. . . Not a city, not a village, not a house, not a sign of settled habitation was there except the few huts of Magdala, and the shattered houses of Tiberias. A mournful and solitary silence reigned triumphant. Desolation keeps unbroken Sabbath in Galilee now." *

An equally graphic description is given of another district. "Geba, the ancient city of Canaan, the stronghold of Benjamin, is now represented by a few ruinous huts, in which some half-dozen shepherds find a home. A shattered tower, and the foundations of an old church, with heaps of hewn stones and rubbish, are the only vestiges of former greatness. Standing there all solitary on its bare rocky ridge, looking down over barren hills and naked ravines upon the scathed valley of the Jordan, it is the very type of desolation. The curse has fallen heavily upon 'Geba of Benjamin.' When Elisha came up the defile from Jericho to Bethel, forests clothed the surrounding heights; now there is not a tree (II. Kings ii. 24). Vineyards then covered the terraced sides of glen and hill from base to sum-

* *Giant Cities of Bashan*, &c., pp. 107, 108.

mit. Cities and fortresses, in the days of Israel's power, crowned every peak and studded every ridge; shapeless mounds now mark their deserted sites. From the site of Geba no less than nine ruined towns and villages were pointed out to me. How wonderfully have the predictions of Moses been fulfilled! 'I will destroy your high places. . . I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries into desolation. . . And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it' (Levit. xxvi. 30, 32)."*

But not only was it predicted that the land should be desolate;

THE DURATION OF THE DESOLATION

was also foretold. It is a plain inference from the passages we have referred to in Levit. xxvi. and Deut. xxix. that, so long as the rebellion continued, this mark of God's anger would remain. But the Scripture has not left us to inferences. The duration, both of the rebellion, and of its punishment, has been distinctly foretold. Isaiah, the Evangelist of prophecy, was sent on a mission which, he was forewarned, would be fruitless of any immediate result. Instead of awaking Israel to repentance, he and those whom he preceded would only deepen their slumber. The prophet asks how long this blindness and death will remain. And he is answered: "Until cities be waste without inhabitant and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and the Lord have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land" (Isaiah vi. 11, 12). That was the answer to the prophet's cry "Lord, how long?" Israel should refuse to hear till deepening judgment had brought the land into the condition pictured in those words—the condition in which it lies to-day.

* *Ibid.*, pp. 179, 180.

We have now to notice what seems to me one of the most surprising touches in this prophetic description. The land of Israel, bereft of her ancient people, ruined, desolate, was nevertheless to be

A LAND OF PILGRIMAGES!

The prophecy (Deut. xxix. 22) foretells that among those who will draw attention to the land and its judgments will be "THE FOREIGNER THAT SHALL COME FROM A FAR LAND." Let it be noted that the judgments which were to fall were such as should rob Judea of everything which might attract the foreigner from a far land. The cities were to be a waste; the land a desolation. There could be no commerce to allure, nor beauty to attract. And what could it matter to the nations that this had once been the home of the scattered Israelites? Their exclusiveness, their arrogance and turbulence, sowed everywhere a plentiful harvest of hatred and scorn. The fulfilment of this prophecy depended, in short, *upon the triumph of Christianity*. If the covenant which the Jews rejected were once accepted by the Gentiles, and the God of Israel became the God of the nations, then would Judea be indeed "a holy Land." A consecration, deeper than priestly rites could give, would then rest on every spot hallowed by Old or New Testament story. But who could have foreseen that the fall of Israel should be "the riches of the world, and their loss their riches of the Gentiles?" When the last remnant of the Jewish nation was swept from the land by Hadrian in 135 A. D. Christianity was still struggling against fearful odds; and, if men were to judge by what they saw, it had not even then the remotest chance of succeeding in the conflict. Rome was at the height of its power. In the days of its comparative weakness it had subdued one mighty nation after another: it had stamped out powerful and wide-spread conspiracies. What chance had

Christianity, devoid of political influence and without so much as Peter's sword to aid it—what chance had *it,* where all else had failed, of succeeding or even of existing, in the teeth of the determined hostility of the entire Roman Empire? And yet, right through the heart of these improbabilities, those words advanced to their accomplishment. Christianity has long since triumphed. Osiris, Bel and Baal, Zeus and Jupiter, Thor and Odin, and the entire pantheon of the Roman Empire, as well as of nations on whose neck the Roman yoke was never set, have given place to the God of Israel. The land of Judea has long since become more sacred to the Gentile than it ever was to the Jew, for it has been the scene of the life and ministry and suffering of the Son of God. From the Fourth century to the present hour "the foreigner from a far land" has never ceased to tread its soil and to wonder at the fulfilment of prophecy, perhaps unconscious that his own presence there is as wonderful a fulfilment as any.

Before we pass from the Land of Israel, we may glance at some predictions regarding four of its cities. We notice first

THE DOOM OF BETHEL.

This was one of the most ancient sanctuaries of the land, and its situation within the territory of the ten tribes was taken advantage of by Jeroboam. To prevent the tribes going to worship at Jerusalem he reared a temple around its ancient altar, and that semi-idolatrous worship was instituted which prepared the way for the after service of Baal. When God visited the ten tribes for their iniquity, Bethel was also to bear the mark of His indignation. Its altars were to be smitten (Amos iii. 14). Its grandeur was to pass away: "I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end saith the Lord" (iii. 15).

And the desolation was to be still more complete: "Bethel shall come to nought" (v. 5). This judgment was no doubt partly executed by King Josiah. But the words had not then, nor for ages after, reached their fulfilment. It was still a city in the days of Josephus. In the time of Jerome it existed as a small village. The last notice of it is met with in the sixth century. From that time till the beginning of the nineteenth century we have no further reference to it. In the middle ages travellers pass over the site without remark, and it is only in recent times that it has been identified. And now the veil is lifted only to show how fully the word has been fulfilled. "Bethel is at present represented by a hamlet called Beit-in. It is not yet (1851) 20 years since people began to identify it with the ancient Bethel. The latter had fallen quite into oblivion. Its ruins cover a large extent of ground. . . . . The foundations of houses, loose building-stones, and fragments of walls, are to be seen in abundance." * It is a "confused mass of prostrate walls and ruins. . . . We have seen no place in this country whose present condition is in such painful contrast to its past history as poor fallen Bethel."† Dean Stanley says, "Bethel, the 'House of God,' has become literally Bethaven, 'the house of naught.'" One speaks of "the wild and stony desolation that spreads itself over these old mountain heights," and another describes it as "that dreary field of ruin."

Such was the doom which hung over the Holy Place of the ten tribes. A similar one rested on

SAMARIA,

which, from the days of Omri, was their capital and one of the chief glories of the country. If we are to judge from the length of the sieges which this city

* *Van de Velde,* II., pp. 282, 283.

† *The Land and the Book,* II., pp. 91, 93.

sustained, its position must be reckoned among the very strongest in the land. It was equally marked by beauty and fertility. But what are natural strength and beauty and fertility without righteousness? After speaking of the indignation of God at the "transgression of Jacob" and "the sins of the house of Israel," the prophet Micah asks: "What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? . . . Therefore I will make Samaria as the heap of the field, and as the plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof" (Micah i. 5, 6).

But here, as elsewhere, the doom lingered and seemed sometimes to be swept back and defied. In 109 B. C. the Jewish High Priest, John Hyrcanus, took Samaria after a year's siege, and levelled it to the ground. The desolation was not, however, of long duration. It was rebuilt by the orders of Gabinius about 50 years after, and was a few years later restored fully and with great splendour by Herod the Great, who named it Sebaste (Augusta) in honour of his patron the Roman Emperor. Josephus mentions it as a city in 70 A. D. It was the seat of a Roman colony in the third century of our era, and on the conversion of the empire it became an Episcopal See. The names of the Bishops of Sebaste appear from time to time in the records of the Councils—the last notice occurring in connection with the Synod of Jerusalem, held in the year 536. It was taken by the Mohammedans in the beginning of the seventh century, and it figures also in the story of the Crusades. For some time after it retained its position among the cities of Palestine. Sir John Maundeville, who visited the country in 1322, calls it "the chief city" of the district. But the doom has long since fallen, and the prediction which so many ages seemed to mock, has become the most accurate of all descriptions. Henry Maundrell, telling what he saw in 1697, says: "Sebaste is the ancient Samaria,

the imperial city of the ten tribes after their revolt from the House of David. . . . It is situate upon a long mount of an oval figure, having first a fruitful valley and then a ring of hills running round about it. This great city is now wholly converted into gardens, and all the tokens that remain to testify that there has ever been such a place, are only, on the north side, a large square piazza encompassed with pillars, and on the east some poor remains of a great church."

As it was then found, it has since remained. "The whole hill of Sebastieh," says Robinson, "consists of fertile soil; it is now cultivated to the top, and has upon it many olive and fig trees. The ground has been ploughed for centuries; and hence it is now in vain to look for the foundations and stones of the ancient city." * Van de Velde calls it a "pitiable hamlet, consisting of a few squalid houses, inhabited by a band of plunderers. . . . The shafts of a few pillars only remain standing to indicate the sites of the colonnades. . . . Samaria, a huge heap of stones! her foundations discovered, her streets ploughed up, and covered with corn fields and olive gardens. . . . Samaria has been destroyed, but her rubbish has been thrown down into the valley; her foundation stones, those grayish ancient quadrangular stones of the time of Omri and Ahab, are discovered, and lie scattered about on the slope of the hill."† "Ruins everywhere," writes another, "in the valley, on the hill-side, down the mountain-top, amidst the olive-groves, the wheat-fields, and the vineyards, forcibly bringing before the mind the wrath of God against that city."‡ Here also the words have been literally fulfilled. The prediction has become a description. The stones of the great city have been taken up by the cultivators and piled to-

* *Researches in Palestine,* II., p. 307.
† *Syria and Palestine,* I., pp. 378-384. ‡ *The Land and the Book,* II., p. 112.

gether or thrown down the hill-sides, that its site might be turned into fields and vineyards. Samaria has been changed into "the heap of the field" and into "the planting of a vineyard." Its stones are poured down into the valley and its very foundations are laid bare.

Two other cities, the names of which are forever embalmed in the story of our Lord's life on earth, demand a passing notice. CAPERNAUM "rose under the gentle declivities of hills that encircled an earthly Paradise. There were no such trees, and no such gardens anywhere in Palestine as in the land of Gennesareth. . . Josephus, in a passage of glowing admiration, after describing the sweetness of its waters, and the delicate temperature of its air, its palms, and vines, and oranges, and figs, and almonds, and pomegranates, and warm springs, says that the seasons seemed to compete for the honor of its possession, and Nature to have created it as a kind of emulative challenge, wherein she had gathered all the elements of her strength. . . . 'The cities,' says Josephus, 'lie here very thick; and the very numerous villages are so full of people, because of the fertility of the land . . . that the very smallest of them contain above 15,000 inhabitants.' No less than four roads communicated with the shores of the Lake. . . . Through this district passed the great caravans on their way from Egypt to Damascus." *

But Capernaum shared largely in a fuller blessing than trade or earthly fertility and beauty could bestow. It was the home of Jesus during the busy years of His ministry. It was called "His own city." His was a familiar presence in its streets. The dwellers there had been spectators of many a miracle. They had heard His words. The mere story of what was said and done there, carried to many another place, had touched the heart and changed the life. But Capernaum was con-

* Farrar: *Life of Christ,* I., pp. 174, 178.

tent to behold and to listen, and perhaps to admire. But no enduring touch of awe fell on its busy, frivolous, pleasure-seeking life. There was no turning from sin, no seeking after God.

But those who refuse to flee remain to warn. The words of Christ, "And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? Thou shalt go down unto Hades" (Matt. xi. 23), stood inscribed on the page of the gospel long before Capernaum had ceased to dream of increasing prosperity. After the blow had fallen in the Roman conquests of 70 and 135 A. D., Capernaum, like the rest of Galilee, revived again, and the doom of extinction was for a time averted. We have references to it for ages afterwards. It was still a town in the days of Eusebius and Jerome. It was visited by Antoninus Martyr about 600 A. D. Bishop Arculf, who saw it 100 years later, says: "It lies on a narrow piece of ground between the mountain and the lake. On the shore towards the east it extends a long way, having the mountain on the north and the water on the south." Willibald found it inhabited in 722. Brocardus, writing near the end of the thirteenth century, describes it as "a humble village, containing scarcely seven fishermen's huts." Quaresimus, who visited Palestine about 1620, speaks of the site as covered with ruins, but it is open to question whether he did not mistake the site of this ancient city, and since his day *all certainty as to the situation of Capernaum has disappeared.* Most travellers believe that it is to be found at Tell-Hum, of which Ritter says: "The whole place, taken in connection with the great devastation of the fairest decorations by the tooth of time, dashed by the ripples of the Lake, and left to no other companionship than that of the waters, is calculated to awaken the saddest feelings in the mind of the traveller." But Robinson, both in his earlier and later researches, contends that the identification wth Tell-Hum is a mistake. There are cities in Palestine from whose pre-

cincts the tide of life has not yet retired, but from Capernaum it has long since passed away. Capernaum has gone down into Hades, and men are now unable to point with absolute certainty even to its grave.

As might be expected, both Old and New Testaments to point with absolute certainty even to its grave.

JERUSALEM.

To those "who build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity," Micah declared: "Therefore shall Zion for your sakes be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest" (iii. 12). The words may have been fulfilled during the Babylonish captivity, though it is most improbable that, in that time, when the remnant fled into Egypt, and the silence of death fell upon the land, any plough was driven over the site of the city of David. But, although there may have been a temporary fulfilment then, the eye which foresaw that, foresaw more. It must have looked on to the time of which that captivity and desolation were but the warning. The description of the rulers, too, as building up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity, never applied to men more fully than to those who shed the blood of the Holy and Just One with the avowed purpose of preserving the state from Roman encroachment, and who are painted on the pages of Josephus as men steeped in intrigue and unscrupulousness, whose almost daily pathway was one of robbery and murder.

Taking the words, then, as prophetic of the great judgment on the Jewish people, is there anything in the present condition of the city to show that we have not mistaken their application? The reply is that they are the best of all possible descriptions. There are three things mentioned.

MOUNT MORIAH,

"the mountain of the House," whose top was levelled to make a site for the Temple, was to become as "THE HIGH PLACES OF A FOREST." This level space is, as will be readily understood, of very limited extent. Yet part of this limited area *is covered with trees.* "South of the Mosque of Omar there is a space 350 feet in extent filled with lofty cypresses and other trees."* The mountain of the House, once covered with all that gave magnificence, and beauty, and sacredness to Jerusalem, has become like the high places of a forest.

Then JERUSALEM with its homes and palaces

WAS TO BECOME HEAPS.

The Holy City, though still inhabited, has only about one-seventh of its ancient population, and we have already referred to its ruined condition. We are prepared, therefore, for a confirmation of this prediction also; but it is startling to find that Ritter, in his description of the present condition of the city, unconsciously repeats the words of the prediction. He says: "Entering the city, *the piles of rubbish* and the narrow streets compel us to recognize the fact that it is no longer a royal capital, princely in its magnificence, but a squalid town, which shows only too plainly its humiliation and poverty. As a recent traveller has truly and beautifully said, to him who does not see this city with the eye of faith, and who, amid all the strife which now divides the church, does not look forward to the glorious triumph which awaits it, Jerusalem is only a little eastern city *covered with wrecks of past desolation,* suffering under want and oppression, and from which the casual traveller hastens as rapidly as possible. But the classic ground, with its history ex-

* *Ritter's Palestine,* IV., p. 121.

tending over thousands of years, remains, under *all its rubbish and ruins,* still classic.*

The remaining part of the prediction has been as wonderfully accomplished. Zion is even now

PLOUGHED LIKE A FIELD.

"Only the northern portion of Zion is included in the modern walls; and this is occupied chiefly by the Jewish quarter, and by the great Armenian convent. . . Without the walls the level part of Zion is occupied by the Christian cemeteries, the house of Caiaphas (now an Armenian Convent), the Cœnaculum, or Muslim tomb of David, and the adjacent convent, formerly a Latin convent. The rest of the surface is now tilled, and the city of David has become a ploughed field! The eastern slope is likewise in part cultivated." † "Mount Zion," says Dr. Thomson, "is now for the most part a rough field. . . From the tomb of David I passed on through fields of ripe grain. The whole of the hill here is under cultivation, and presents a most literal fulfilment of Micah's prophecy: 'Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field.' It is the only part of Jerusalem 'that is now, or ever has been ,ploughed.' "‡

There are also predictions regarding the sacred city in the New Testament, and, with a word on these, we shall close our survey of the predictions which refer to the Land of Israel. Pointing to the Temple, our Lord said to His disciples, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. xxiv. 2). And again, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). The first of these prophecies foretells

* Robinson *Researches in Palestine,* I., 264, 265. † *Ibid.,* 98.
‡ *The Land and the Book,* I., pp. 410, 539, 540.

THE ANNIHILATION OF THE TEMPLE.

It is generally agreed that the Gospel of Matthew was written some time between 50 and 60 A. D. In the year 70 the first stroke of the judgment fell. One of the very last incidents in that terrible siege was the destruction of the Temple by fire. Josephus records that the burning of the sanctuary was contrary to the wishes of Titus, and was carried out in defiance of his express commands. It might have been supposed, then, that a stay would have been put to any further work of destruction. The blackened walls might have been allowed to stand. But the word of the Lord is sure. Orders were issued to raze the entire city, with the exception of one or two towers and a portion of the wall. These were spared to show to after times what the strength of Jerusalem had been, and what the Roman triumph meant. "Terentius Rufus," says Milman, "executed the work of desolation, of which he was left in charge, with unrelenting severity. Of all the stately city, the populous streets, the palaces of the Jewish Kings, the fortresses of her warriors, the Temple of her God, not a ruin remained, except the tall towers of Phasaelis, Mariamne, and Hippicus, and part of the western wall, which was left as a defense for the Roman camp." * The work was completed on the suppression of the last rebellion under Barcochebas in 135 A. D. The very foundations of the Temple seem then to have been torn up and the plough to have been passed over them. Before the Temple to Jupiter Capitolinus was reared upon its site by the Emperor Hadrian, there remained of the buildings to which our Lord that day pointed, not one stone upon another which was not thrown down.

The remaining prophecy depicts the then

* *History of the Jews*, II., pp. 377, 378.

in one brief sentence. Every one is aware that the city, whose very name is so dear to the heart of the Jew, has been "trodden down." Nor need we search the pages of history to prove that its lords and possessors have been the Gentiles. Never once, since the days of Hadrian, has the Jew ruled in the city of his fathers. There were times when it was death for him to enter it, or indeed to approach near enough to behold it from a distance. The presence of the Jew is barely tolerated even now, and the voice of one Arab woman is enough to frighten away bearded men from the place of wailing. The prophecy states further that the Gentile oppression will continue till judgment should also visit them, and "the time of the Gentiles" should be fulfilled. This prediction is remarkable for a deliberate and powerful attempt which was made to defeat it, and so to disprove the claims of Jesus. The Emperor Julian, in his attempt to dethrone Christianity and to reinstate the ancient paganism, hit upon the device of restoring the Jews and rebuilding the Temple. We shall let Gibbon tell the story. "He resolved to erect, without delay, on the commanding eminence of Moriah, a stately temple, which might eclipse the splendor of the church of the Resurrection on the adjacent hill of Calvary; to establish an order of priests, whose interested zeal would detect the arts, and resist the ambition of their Christian rivals; and to invite a numerous colony of Jews, whose stern fanaticism would be always prepared to second, and even to anticipate, the hostile measures of the Pagan government. Among the friends of the Emperor (if the names of Emperor and of friend are not incompatible), the first place was assigned by Julian himself to the virtuous and learned Alypius. The humanity of Alypius was tempered by severe justice and manly forti-

tude; and, while he exercised his abilities in the civil administration of Britain, he imitated, in his poetical compositions, the harmony and softness of the odes of Sappho. This minister, to whom Julian communicated without reserve his most careless levities and his most serious counsels, received an extraordinary commission to restore in its pristine beauty the Temple of Jerusalem; and the diligence of Alypius required and obtained the strenuous support of the governor of Palestine. At the call of their great deliverer the Jews, from all the provinces of the Empire, assembled on the holy mountain of their fathers, and their insolent triumph alarmed and exasperated the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem. The desire of rebuilding the Temple has, in every age, been the ruling passion of the children of Israel. In this propitious moment the men forgot their avarice, and the women their delicacy; spades and pickaxes of silver were provided by the vanity of the rich, and the rubbish was transported in mantles of silk and purple. Every purse was opened in liberal contributions, every hand claimed a share in the pious labor; and the commands of a great monarch were executed by the enthusiasm of a whole people.

"Yet, on this occasion, *the joint efforts of power and enthusiasm were unsuccessful;* and the ground of the Jewish Temple, which is now covered by a Mahometan Mosque, still continued to exhibit the same edifying spectacle of ruin and desolation. . . An earthquake, a whirlwind, and a fiery eruption, which overturned and scattered the new foundations of the Temple, are attested, with some variations, by contemporary and respectable evidence. This public event is described by Ambrose, bishop of Milan, in an epistle to the Emperor Theodosius, which must provoke the severe animadversion of the Jews; by the eloquent Chrysostom, who might appeal to the memory of the

elder part of his congregation at Antioch; and by Gregory Nazianzen, who published his account of the miracle before the expiration of the same year. The last of these writers has boldly declared that this preternatural event was not disputed by the infidels; and his assertion, strange as it may seem, is confirmed by the unexceptionable testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus. The philosophic soldier, who loved the virtues, without adopting the prejudices, of his master, has recorded, in his candid and judicious history of his own times, the extraordinary obstacles which interrupted the restoration of the Temple at Jerusalem. 'Whilst Alypius, assisted by the governor of the province, urged with vigor and diligence the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place from time to time inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; and the victorious element continuing in this manner obstinately and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned!'" *

Gibbon doubts the miracle. "At this important crisis," he says truly enough, "any singular accident of nature would assume the appearance, and produce the effects, of a real prodigy." Michaelis ventured the suggestion that the flames may have been due to the ignition of foul air generated in the caverns by which the Temple area is known to be undermined. But, whatever the explanation may be, the fact is undoubted that the attempt was made to defeat the prophecy, and that the attempt failed. Neither the strength and resolute determination of the Roman legions, nor the enthusiasm and outpoured wealth of the Jews were able to bring this "word of the Lord" to nought.

We conclude the present chapter with a glance at the testimony of

* *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* chap. xxiii.

the scene not only of the captivity of the Jews, but also of the events which broke the unity of our race, and scattered its fragments over the earth. Of Babylon, the capital,

THE MOST APPALLING DESOLATION

was foretold. "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldæans' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" (Isa. xiii. 19). At the beginning of our era the work of destruction had been begun, but was by no means perfected. When captured by Alexander, Babylon was still great, and it is said the conqueror intended to make it the capital of his dominions. Alexander's successors did not, however, carry out his intention. In 300 B. C. Seleucia was built, and the glory of Babylon was gradually transferred to her rival. About the beginning of the Christian era only a small part of Babylon was inhabited; and that chiefly, if not wholly, by Jews; the rest of the city was under cultivation. About the year 40 A. D. a persecution of the Jews under Caligula still further diminished the number of the inhabitants. Lucian, in the second century, predicts that its very site, like that of Nineveh, would soon be a subject of investigation. A number of notices, by various writers, enables us to trace the history of the desolation. Jerome, writing about the beginning of the fourth century, says that the site of Babylon was made into a hunting-ground for the Persian Kings; and Cyril of Alexandria, about 412, mentions that the canals from the Euphrates had been filled up, and that the city was then little better than a marsh. In 460 Theodoret remarks that it was no longer inhabited by either Assyrians or Chaldæans, and that only a few Jews had their habitations scattered among the ruins.

Ibn Haukal, in 917, speaks of Babel as a small village, and says that scarcely any remains of Babylon were to be seen; and when, in the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela passed through Chaldæa, the ancient capital was an utter desolation, and the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace were inaccessible, owing to the number of scorpions and serpents by which they were infested.

The desolation, it was foretold, should be

UTTER AND LASTING:

"It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their flocks to lie down there" (Isa. xiii. 20). We have seen how the ocean of human life gradually receded from this vast city, once the home of countless multitudes. Wave after wave rushed back from the retiring waters, as if resolved to cling to the ancient habitations; but the hand of doom was mightier, and every remnant of its once busy, joyous, life has long since passed away. Hillah, six miles southwest of Babylon, which marks the site of the ancient town where the plebeians dwelt apart, has a population of 6,000; but not one human dwelling rests upon the site of the ancient city—the glory of the Chaldæans' excellency. The Bedouin, though he pastures his flocks in the immediate neighbourhood, regards the ruins themselves with superstitious dread, and the latter part of the prediction is also fulfilled to the very letter. The tents of the Arabs are freely pitched on the Chaldæan plains, but not one of them is pitched amid the ruins of Babylon. Other cities named in prophecy have become folds for flocks; but no shepherd makes his flocks to lie down among the mounds of ancient Babylon. Ruined cities frequently afford in the remnants of

their walls protection for flock and shepherd of which advantage is eagerly taken. But "on the actual ruins of Babylon the Arabian neither pitches his tent nor pastures his flocks—in the first place, because the nitrous soil produces no pasture to tempt him; and secondly, because an evil reputation attaches to the entire site, which is thought to be the haunt of evil spirits."*

But a deeper humiliation was to be inflicted. Something is said about those who *should* dwell within its precincts. The

TENANTS

of the ruined city are described. "But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces" (Isa. xiii. 21, 22). This feature of the desolation has been noted by every traveller. In carrying excavations into the great mound of Babil, Layard came upon some coffins containing skeletons. "A foul and unbearable stench," he says, "issued from those loathsome remains, and from the passages, *which had become the dens of wild beasts,* which had worked their way into them from above." And the "doleful creatures are not wanting." "Owls start from the scanty thickets, and the foul jackal skulks through the furrows." "The mound was full of large holes; we entered some of them, and found them strewed with the carcases and skeletons of animals recently killed."† Speaking of the Birs Nimroud, Heeren says, "Its recesses are inhabited by lions, three being quietly basking on its heights when Porter approached it, and, scarcely intimidated

* Rawlinson, *Egypt and Babylon,* p. 206. † Keppel.

by the cries of the Arabs, gradually and slowly descended into the plain." Then

THE ASPECT

the place should wear was described while it was yet in its glory: "Babylon shall become heaps" (Jer. li. 37). Were it not that we are in the midst of surpassing wonders, it would be in the highest degree astonishing to mark how travellers are here compelled to use the very words of Scripture. *"The wide extent,"* says one, *"of mounds* and vestiges of buildings must arrest the attention of every beholder; who, at the same time, will not fail to remark how little *the shapeless heaps* can suggest in any degree either the nature or object of the structures of which they are the wrecks."* "The ruins," remarks another, *"are mounds* formed by the decomposition of buildings, channelled and furrowed by the weather, and strewed with pieces of brick, bitumen, and pottery. . . I imagined I should have said, 'Here were the walls, and such must have been the extent of the area; there stood the palace; and this most assuredly was the temple of Belus.' I was completely deceived; instead of a few insulated mounds, I found *the whole face of the country covered* with vestiges of buildings, in some places consisting of brick walls surprisingly fresh, in others, merely of *a vast succession of mounds of rubbish* of such indeterminate figures, variety, and extent, as to involve the person who should have formed any theory in inextricable confusion."† It is impossible to find, in the whole range of language, a term which will more fitly describe the present condition of the city than that which is used in the prophecy. Babylon has become heaps.

Other details are added. "A curious feature in the

* Fraser, *Mesopotamia and Assyria.* † Rich.

prophecies," says Professor Rawlinson, "is the apparent contradiction that exists between two sets of statements contained in them, one of which attributes the desolation of Babylon to the action of water, while the other represents the water as 'dried up,' and the site as cursed with drought and barrenness. To the former class belong the statements of Isaiah: 'I will also make it *a possession* for the bittern, and pools of water' (xiv. 23); and 'the cormorant (pelican?), and the bittern shall possess it' (xxxiv. 11); together with the following passage of Jeremiah, 'The *sea is come up upon Babylon;* she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof' (li. 42); to the latter such declarations as the subjoined, *A drought* is upon her waters, and they shall be *dried up*' (Jer. l. 38); 'I will *dry up* her sea' (li. 36); 'Her cities are a desolation, *a dry land and a desert*' (l. 12); 'Come down and sit *in the dust,* O virgin daughter of Babylon' " (Isa. xlvii. 1).

"But this antithesis, this paradox, is exactly in accordance with the condition of things which travellers note as to this day attaching to the site. The dry, arid aspect of the ruins, of the vast mounds which cover the greater buildings, and even of the lesser elevations which spread far into the plain at their base, receives continual notice. 'The whole surface of the mounds appears to the eye,' says Ker Porter, 'nothing but *vast irregular hills of earth,* . . . while the foot at every step sinks into *the loose dust and rubbish.*' And again, *'Every spot of ground in sight was totally barren.* . . . It is an old adage that, where a curse has fallen, grass will never grow. In like manner the decomposing materials of a Babylonian structure doom the earth on which they perish to an everlasting sterility.' 'On all sides,' says Sir Austen Layard, 'fragments of glass, marble, pottery, and inscribed brick are mingled with *that peculiar nitrous and blanched soil* which, bred from the

remains of ancient habitations, checks or destroys vegetation, and renders the site of Babylon *a naked and hideous waste.*'

"On the other hand, the neglect of the embankments and canals which anciently controlled the waters of the Euphrates, and made them a defence and not a danger, has consigned great part of what was anciently Babylon to the continual invasion of floods, which, stagnating in the lower grounds, have converted large tracts once included within the walls of the city into lakes, pools, and marshes."*

And, not only have the prophecies pictured the aspect of Babylon, they have also described

THE PROCESS

by which its edifices have been turned into dust. "Cast her up as heaps," cries the prophet to the men of the then far-distant future—"cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left" (Jer. l. 26). The tearing down of the ruins has been continued for centuries. The bricks, even at this late date, are so excellent in quality, that the shape of the mounds is being continually altered by the excavations which are made for them. "El Kasr, when visited by Rich, was nearly a square of seven hundred yards in length and breadth. But even in the seven years, which intervened between this visit and that of Porter, *the everlasting digging and carrying away of the bricks* had been sufficient to change its shape. What then must have been its size twenty centuries before! . . . About twenty-four hundred feet from Kasr is Amram Hill. The whole of this stupendous heap is broken like that of the Kasr into deep caverned ravines and long winding furrows, from the number of bricks that have been taken away."† "To this day," says Layard, "there

* *Egypt and Babylon,* pp. 207-209. † Heeren.

are men who have no other trade than that of gathering bricks from this vast heap, and taking them for sale to the neighbouring towns and villages, and even to Baghdad. There is scarcely a house in Hillah which is not built of them."

And the Scripture takes us further still. It foretells that, while her mounds should be "cast up as heaps" in the search for building material,

STONES SHOULD BE DESTROYED.

"There is one fact," says Mr. Rassam, "connected with the destruction of Babylon and the marvellous fulfilment of prophecy which struck me more than anything else, which fact seems never to have been noticed by any traveller, and that is the non-existence in the several modern buildings in the neighbourhood of Babylon of any sign of stone which had been dug up from its ancient ruins. It seems that, in digging for old materials, the Arabs used the bricks for building purposes, but *always burnt the stone thus discovered for lime,* which fact wonderfully fulfils the Divine words of Jeremiah, namely: 'And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations: but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord' (Jer. li. 26)." When we reflect that these stones were brought from far (for no stone is furnished by the vast plain of Babylonia), and must have been in a special degree the pride of the great city, we understand the significance of the doom. All her beauty and magnificence were to perish without memorial.

We cannot conclude this hurried notice of Babylon, without remarking, what is certainly not the least surprising of its testimonies to the Scripture—the fulfillment of the words: "Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyeth all the earth; and I will stretch out mine

hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee

A BURNT MOUNTAIN"

(Jer. li. 25). Babylonia is an immense plain in which no natural mountain or hill has ever stood. And yet Babylon must have presented some feature which gave the epithet, "destroying mountain," propriety and force. If there existed some stupendous structure which was in a peculiar way the confidence of this people, the figure would be explained at once. If around and upon such a height the temples of their deities were placed, and if the height itself was consecrated by the most ancient and sacred traditions, we could understand why the threat against the city and the nation should be addressed to this, and why it should bear some special mark of His displeasure, who will not give His glory to another, nor His praise to graven images. An inscription of Nebuchadnezzar's has been found which relates how he repaired and splendidly adorned what he names "the Tower of the seven stages, the Eternal House, the Temple of the seven luminaries of the Earth." "The discovery of this inscription," says Lenormant, "points out to us, among the ruins still lifting their heads around the site of ancent Babylon, the still gigantic remains of a monument which, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, was believed to be the tower of Babel. It is this that the inhabitants of the country still call 'Birs Nimrod' ('the Tower of Nimrod'), and in the midst of the plains *it still looks like a mountain.*" It was described by Herodotus. There was, first of all, "a tower of solid masonry, a furlong in length and breadth." Upon this, "was raised a second tower, and on that a third, and so on up to eight. The ascent to the top is on the outside, by a path which winds round all the towers. When

one is about half-way up, one finds a resting-place and seats where persons are wont to sit some time on their way to the summit." This vast structure was dedicated to Bel, the chief deity of the Babylonians, and the supposed favor of this deity gave Babylon a sacredness even in the estimation of the neighbouring nations. It is named in Assyrian inscriptions "the dwelling-place of Bel." "The earth about the hill is now clear, but is again surrounded by walls which form an oblong square, enclosing numerous heaps of rubbish, probably once the dwellings of the inferior deities, or of the priests and officers of the Temple. The appearance of the tower of Nimrod is sublime even in its ruin. Clouds play round its summit."* Recall now the words, "I will roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain," and place by the side of them these, "It is rent from the top nearly half-way to the bottom; and at its foot lay several unshapen masses of fine brickwork, still bearing traces of a violent fire, which has given them a vitrified appearance, whence it has been conjectured that it has been struck by lightning. The appearance of the hill on the eastern side evidently shows that this enormous mass has been reduced more than half."* It has been rolled down from the rocks, and been made a burnt mountain!

We glance, in conclusion, at Chaldæa, the country of which Babylon was the mighty capital. The Chaldæans had spoiled many nations, and many thrones had gone down before them. But a day of vengeance was to come. She was to be

THE PREY OF MANY NATIONS.

The judgment was recorded: "Many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and

* Heeren.

I will recompense them according to their deeds" (Jer. xxv. 14). The following brief sketch of their history will show how the words were kept. Babylonia was the prey first of the Medes and the Persians; then, about three hundred years before the time of our Lord, of the Macedonians under Alexander and his successors; then of the Parthians; and afterwards, from time to time, of the Romans. For two centuries, from 636 A. D., it was held by the Arabs. In 1218 it was desolated by the Tartars under Zingis. "From the Caspian to the Indus they ruined a tract of many hundred miles, which was adorned with the habitations and labours of mankind; and five centuries have not been sufficient to repair the ravages of four years."* For a time the country was in the hands of the assassins, who were overthrown and succeeded by Holagou Khan, the grandson of Zingis, in 1258. "I shall not enumerate," says Gibbon, "the crowd of sultans, emirs, and atabeks whom he trampled into dust." In 1380 it was conquered by Tamerlane, who erected on the ruins of Baghdad a pyramid of ninety thousand heads. Since then it has passed from the grasp of one fierce race into that of another. The prophecy is simply the summary of Chaldæa's history: "Many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds."

It was also written that all should find

AN ABUNDANT SPOIL.

"All that spoil her shall be satisfied" (Jer. l. 10). The teeming riches of the soil and the position of the country, which forced upon it a chief share in the world's commerce, seemed to bid defiance to the ravages of man. No sooner did a fresh horde of conquerors settle down upon the land than it heaped its

* Gibbon.

treasure upon them till they too were ready for the spoiler. Gibbon has painted the joy of the Arabs at their sudden enrichment here in 636, little thinking how every word he penned was bowing before the prediction, "All that spoil her shall be satisfied." "The naked robbers of the desert," he says, "were suddenly enriched beyond the measure of their hope or knowledge. Each chamber revealed a new treasure, secreted with art, or ostentatiously displayed; the gold and silver, the various wardrobes and precious furniture surpassed (says Abulfeda) the estimate of fancy or of numbers; and another historian defines the untold and almost infinite mass by the fabulous computation of three thousands of thousands of thousands of pieces of gold."

There was, last of all, a prophecy which stood in the most complete contradiction to the character of the country for centuries after the beginning of the Christian era.

The entire

LAND WAS TO BE A DESOLATION.

Among the most fertile and populous of all countries, it was to be among the most barren and desolate. "How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations" (Jer. l. 23)! "Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby" (Jer. li. 43). The wealth of the soil may be estimated from the fact that, though Babylonia and Assyria formed only a ninth part of the Persian dominions, they contributed together one-third of the entire revenue of the empire. The country, consisting of one enormous plain, lay in the embrace of two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates. By a most elaborate system of

canals the enriching waters were spread over the whole land. The result was seen in a fertility so astonishing that Herodotus was afraid to tell all he knew lest he should be accused of exaggeration. The crop of corn ranges, he tells us, between two and three hundredfold. "The blade of the wheat-plant and barley-plant is often four fingers in breadth. As for the millet and the sesame, I shall not say to what height they grow, though within my own knowledge; for I am not ignorant that what I have already written concerning the fruitfulness of Babylonia must seem incredible to those who have never visited the country."

"Thus favored by nature," writes Heeren, "this country necessarily became the central point where the merchants of nearly all the nations of the civilized world assembled; and such we are informed by history it remained as long as the international commerce of Asia flourished. Neither the devastating sword of the conquering nations, nor the heavy yoke of Asiatic despotism could tarnish, though for a time they might dim, its splendour. It was only when the Europeans found a new route to India across the ocean and converted the great commerce of the world from a land trade to a sea trade, that the royal city on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates began to decline. Then, deprived of its commerce, it fell a victim to the two-fold oppression of anarchy and despotism, and sank to its original state—a stinking morass and a barren steppe."* "The whole plain is thickly covered with traces of former habitations. Scarcely, indeed, is there a single rood of ground which does not exhibit some fragment of brick, or tile, or glass, or sepulchral urn to tell that man has lived in a region which now presents to the eye but one vast expanse of arid desert; a howling wilder-

* Heeren.

ness, where the only evidence that he still exists is afforded by the black Bedouin tent, or the wandering camel which here and there dots its dreary surface."* We have seen how slowly the doom of Babylon was accomplished, and that it is being perfected even now; and it is only within the last six hundred years that this judgment has fallen upon Chaldæa, and that her cities have become "a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness." What remains as yet unfulfilled will also be accomplished. The time will come when the silence of death will fall and remain unbroken: when no man will dwell there nor any son of man pass thereby.

Place these prophetic pictures, the features of which we have now looked at in detail—place them for a moment in full view. Remember that we are dealing with undoubted predictions, and that there is no room for the supposition that they were written after, and not before, the event. Reflect that Judea and her cities, that Babylon and the land of which she was once the capital and the glory, are fully and minutely described as they were afterwards to be, and that the words of the historian and the traveller merely repeat the language of the prophets. Let us deal with this fact as we should with any other, and shall we not own that doubts are dispelled and convictions deepened? God is not a myth, or a dream. He is, and He has spoken with us. His words are remembered and fulfilled; and, if every word spoken in judgment is accomplished, let us rejoice that His covenant is also "remembered for ever." We can trust Him utterly. "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

* Fraser.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PROPHETIC FORECAST OF THE WORLD'S ENTIRE HISTORY.

We have now travelled, in our survey of the pictures drawn by the pen of prophecy, from Egypt to Babylon, and have touched upon almost the whole area covered by sacred story. Everywhere, in the nationalities which remain as well as in those which have passed away, we have met with marvels which form an array of evidence in favor of the old belief regarding the words of Scripture, the value of which it would be hard to over-estimate.

But, as we read the story of the past, our attention is attracted not only to lands and peoples. There are also great movements which more properly form the material of history, and give to it unity and interest. The story of peoples becomes in this case the history of man. We observe the great empires of the ancient world sweeping away the barriers which separated race from race, and welding together ever more perfectly widely-scattered nationalities. Each empire, which succeeds to the coveted dominion, succeeds also to the work of uniting what the past had scattered and the ages had more and more widely sundered. We have now to notice that these developments did not escape the observation of the thought which breathes in this Word, and that the whole of them have been MAPPED OUT AND DESCRIBED.

The book of Daniel, with which we have now to deal, has been one of the greatest stumbling-blocks in the path of those who have difficulty in believing the miraculous. It consequently holds quite a singular place in the story of the attacks which have been made upon the authenticity and the inspiration of the Scriptures. It was to it that Porphyry first applied the principles and methods of what has been called "the higher criticism." Many of the prophecies had been so strikingly fulfilled that, to evade their force, they were set down as history, and the date of the composition of the book was fixed at a point from which the predictions seemed to become less distinct and clear. When the modern school sprang into being, it was against Daniel that the attack was again pressed with the greatest determination and assurance. The mounds raised in the former siege still remained. These were now seized and crowned with all the appliances of modern warfare. The result has been, in the estimation of the critics, one of the most signal and satisfactory kind. The demonstration that Daniel neither penned nor saw the book which has so long claimed him for its author, has been, says Bunsen, "one of the finest triumphs and most useful achievements of modern criticism."*

But the triumph did not meet with universal recognition. The result was objected to on various grounds. For one thing, the moral sense was outraged. It has been often urged that the Scriptures must either be received as the Word of God or be held to be the most unblushing and blasphemous of falsehoods; and that, if the contentions of "the critics" were admitted, there would be left us neither moral books nor, in the writers of them, honest men. But while fully admitting that, in their view, the

* *God in History*, i., p. 191.

writer of Daniel was not honest, the critics maintained that he should nevertheless be regarded as admirable! Bunsen speaks of him as "a pious man" and "the pious author." "At this juncture," he says, "a pious man resolved to avail himself of the traditions regarding Daniel, and apply them to the circumstances of his own time, and, *in the name of that prophet,* proclaim words of admonition and prophecy to the faithful around him."* The necessities of the critical position must surely be painfully great when honorable men have to justify supposed pious frauds, the like of which, were they to disgrace the history of their own times, they would visit with the most unqualified condemnation and scorn.

The verdict was doubted, however, upon other grounds as well. Historians felt that the picture given of the times was such as could have sprung only from a personal and intimate acquaintance with them. Heeren gladly availed himself of the light thrown by the book upon the arrangements of the Babylonian-Chaldæan empire; and even Schlosser, thoroughly identified though he was with the critical school, was compelled to say: "In Daniel we think we possess the only remains of the modes of thought and the manners of the Babylonian period." The inferences of the historians have now been completely vindicated by the advance of modern discovery. The inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar have been read; we are now, by the aid of contemporary documents, brought face to face with the times in which he lived; and these are the times and the man with whom we have been long familiar in the pages of Daniel, "It is curious to notice," says Lenormant,† "that the three parts composing the great work on magic, of which Sir Henry Rawlinson has found the remains, correspond exactly to the three

* *God in History,* i., p. 192. † *Chaldæan Magic,* p. 14.

classes of Chaldæan doctors which Daniel enumerates. The further we advance in the knowledge of the cuneiform texts, the greater does the necessity appear of reversing the condemnation much too prematurely pronounced by the German exegetical school against the writings of the fourth of the greater prophets."

We now propose to go further than any confirmation of the historical character of the book can possibly carry us. It contains prophecies which professed to unveil the then

FAR-OFF FUTURE.

In one of them we have a forecast of the world's entire history, brief, indeed, but clear and well-defined; its grand epochs are carefully marked, their nature distinguished, their number and the order of their occurrence fixed. Have the more than two thousand years which have passed since the prophet wrote, anything to say as to whether these are the words of God? What stamp has Time, the unerring and impartial judge of every such pretension, set upon this book?

That is the question: let us now turn to the answer. In the last days of the Assyrian Empire, Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, had proclaimed himself independent, and, in conjunction with the Medes, had crushed what remained of the Assyrian power by the capture of Nineveh. Necho, king of Egypt, had meanwhile possessed himself of the western dominions of Assyria, and was engaged in the siege of Carchemish on the Euphrates. Nabopolassar sent his son Nebuchadnezzar to sweep back the Egyptian hosts. Necho received a crushing defeat under the walls of Carchemish, and the entire territory from the Euphrates to the borders of Egypt was the reward of the victory. Nebuchadnezzar fol-

lowed hard upon the heels of the retreating foe, and was engaged in the siege of Pelusium when the tidings reached him of his father's death. Making a hasty peace with Necho, he sped back to Babylon to assume possession of the kingdom. He ascended the throne without opposition, and now in this the second year of his reign his sway was fully established alike over the old conquests and the new.

But the warrior's spirit cannot rest. The power he holds is not something to be enjoyed; it is something to be used; it is a means, and not an end. He has retired to rest, but the busy brain pursues its all-absorbing fancy. Whither will he turn his arms? and in what way may he most effectually break the power he means to attack? When he and his stand alone in the earth, what then? The dominion has returned again to Babylon, the ancient mistress of the kingdoms; but will it remain here? Sleep at last seals the senses, but from the unresting sea of thought wave after wave is flung. In dreams he still pursues ambition's path. The ever changing fancies sweep through the soul in their swift, unending flight; but at last their aimless career is checked, and, built out of the dreamer's "thoughts upon his bed," a vision rises, clear, consistent, terrible. The conqueror's spirit is bowed with awe; and when he has gazed and pondered, the vision fades and disappears. The unbridled thoughts sweep over his soul again, and blur, though they cannot efface, the deep impression of the dream.

This dream was to bear upon it the stamp that it was sent from God, and so, though it was given to the king, his lips were not permitted to tell it. The vision was to be related to him by one whose words, awakening his own slumbering recollection, were to be to him a demonstration of the interpreter's prophetic mission. The Babylonian diviners were astonished by the monarch's demand not only to fur-

nish an interpretation, but also to make known a forgotten dream. The story of how Daniel saved them, as well as his companions and himself, from destruction has been familiar to us from the days of our childhood. He begged for time. He betook himself to prayer; and he did not plead in vain. The next morning saw him stand in the king's presence. He reminded Nebuchadnezzar how he had seen a colossal image whose "brightness was excellent" and whose "form was terrible." He had then marked that though the image was a unity, it was constructed of various materials. The head was of gold, the arms and the breast of silver, the belly and the haunches of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet and toes partly of iron, and partly of that which, though in appearance like iron, has nothing of its strength or power of resistance—brittle earthenware. Then there was a change. This image, with its terribleness and splendour, was crushed beneath an overwhelming vengeance. He had seen a stone cut out of the mountain side (the emblem of the Eternal, Patient, Strength); he had seen it cut out and fashioned without hands. And now this stone, miraculous in its origin, fell upon the toes of the image and crushed and ground it to powder, till the iron, and the clay, and the brass, and the silver, and the gold became as "the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them, and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. ii. 35).

That was the Divine parable. The colossal image, with its splendour and terribleness, was a fitting emblem of the human sovereignty which men have not only feared, but have also regarded with enthusiastic admiration. In the 7th chapter of Daniel we have a parallel vision. The same empires pass before the prophet's sight; but there they are represented as beasts of

prey. Grotius has pointed out that the imagery of the visions is varied in accordance with the character of the men to whom they are sent. The prophet, with a heart which bleeds for human woe, sees the kingdoms as they pass on through blood and suffering; they arise to kill and to devour. He, on the other hand, whose heart is fired with the lust of glory, sees only the realized ideal of human ambition—a god-like man and things that are precious and strong—fine gold and silver and brass and iron.

But we have more than the symbolism of the vision: the parable is fully explained. The image, which in its completeness represents the entire sovereignty of man over his fellows, is divided into four parts. The first, the head of gold, is identified with the Babylonian empire (Daniel ii. 38). After this there was to arise "another kingdom inferior to" the first, "and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." This was to endure in its latter stage of subdivision till the hour of vengeance should have struck, and "the God of heaven" have "set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (ii. 39, 40, 44). Numbered in this way, and the first of the kingdoms being so plainly designated, the student of history can find no difficulty in the interpretation. But we have every needed help furnished by the Scripture itself. In another vision the second and third kingdoms are identified respectively with the empire of Persia and the empire of Greece (Dan. viii. 20, 21). The fourth kingdom, though more fully described than any other, is not named; but ere the Scripture story is finished, this kingdom too stands plainly before us. We open the New Testament and find the Roman power bearing rule in Judea. As to "the stone," the figure is applied to Christ again and again, and His own words will be remembered: "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone, which the builders rejected, the same was

made the head of the corner?' . . he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces; but, on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust" (R. V. Matt. xxi. 42, 44). These last words are an evident reference to Dan. ii. 35.

The four empires are therefore determined by the Scripture itself. They are the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. The fifth is the dominion of Christ. Dealing only with fulfilled prophecy, we do not enter upon the latter part of the prediction; and confining ourselves to the prophecies fulfilled at or since the beginning of the Christian era, there is much of the earlier which also lies outside of range. I shall simply point in passing to what everyone knows to be true, that the dominions named succeeded each other in this very order. The Babylonian power was followed by the Persian under Cyrus; this was overturned by the Grecian under Alexander; and the Grecian was in like manner supplanted by the Roman. But the marvels of this prophecy are not confined to that portion of it whose accomplishment lay nearest to the prophet's time. For example, the Roman was to be

THE LAST

of the great world-empires. There was to be no other. It is to endure in its subdivision till the kingdom of God is established in the earth. It must be admitted that this part of the prophetic picture is striking, if not startling. Had the writer lived at the beginning of our era and seen the Roman power at the summit of its glory, it would still be inexplicable on any natural grounds how the notion could have occurred to him that this should be the last of the dominions of man. There had been other human dominions before it; why, then, should there not be also other human dominions after it? If experience had been asked to guess the secrets of the future, the

answer would certainly have been that the revolutions of the past would be repeated in the time that was then to come. As the Babylonian dominion went down before the Persian, the Persian before the Greek, the Greek before the Roman, so the Roman might also with certainty have been expected to pass on the sceptre to some other. But what of the fact? What have the nineteen centuries which have elapsed since the beginning of the Christian era to say regarding the prediction? The man who then received this as the word of God looked down the ages and said there would be no other world-dominion of man; and we who now look back through these ages have to confess that there has been no other. The fierce, rude warriors of the north poured like a flood against the western empire in the fifth century, but the dominion of the world was not given to them. In the seventh century the Arab-hordes, sweeping out from the desert, assaulted the empire on the East. They assaulted it also on the West, and it seemed for a time as if the Caliphs might ascend the throne of the Cæsars. But the storm spent its strength, and the Arab had not been made the heir of the Roman. Tartars and Turks swept over the East. They knocked loudly at the gates of the West, and men trembled lest the desolation which had followed in their train might overspread Christendom as well; but to neither was the dominion given. The dream of universal empire has fired the breast of king and warrior, and among them one of the mightiest geniuses whose hand has ever grasped the sword. But not even to Napoleon was it given to weld once more the broken fragments of the Roman Empire into one. There has been, as this prophecy said there should be, a fourth dominion of man;

AND THERE HAS BEEN NO OTHER.

Is it not strange that, during these last 1500 years, in

which the world has been brought more together than it ever was before and has been waiting, as it were, to hail the conqueror and give him a sway fuller than man has ever yet wielded, no one has seized upon the prize? And is it not still more strange than these words should have told us this, and said that the world should look and wait, but that there should be no other till He should come whose right it is to reign? Go no further than this—place only these things together, and then say whether any man need ask where he may find the word of the living God, or where he may obtain the conviction that His hand has been working through all those changes and hastening the salvation for which the whole earth cries.

But the prophecy abounds with marvels.

THE CHARACTER OF THE FOURTH KINGDOM

is fully described. The Roman empire was the furthest removed from the prophet's time and yet it is more clearly depicted than any of the others. To begin with he is struck by its

SINGULARITY.

In the vision given to the prophet himself, "the fourth beast was diverse from all the beasts that were before it" (vii. 7). The marked difference between the Roman empire and those which preceded it is again referred to. It is spoken of as "diverse from all of them" (vii. 19). The full meaning of those words we shall afterwards see. Meanwhile it may be enough to say that in every aspect Rome was diverse from each of the dominions which preceded it. It was an utterly new development in history. Formerly attention was fixed upon conquerors and kings whose will was obeyed and whose plans were executed by the peoples whom they ruled and led. But here our attention is fixed not upon the one but upon the many. It is *the*

people who plan and triumph.. Their dominion does not perish, nor is even their progress arrested, because of the fall of their leaders.

The Roman empire stands alone also in its wide and abiding influence. It did not merely conquer the nations; it impressed its own character upon them. It imparted its own institutions, laws, and spirit. The external dominion has long since passed away, but Rome still rules the nations. In its nature and in its work it was diverse from all that were before it. It is wonderful to notice how the features which strike the mind of the prophet are those which also arrest the attention of the historian. Guizot speaks of Rome as *"the most extraordinary dominion that* ever led captive and oppressed a world." "Now *for the first time,"* says Heeren, "appears on the page of history the fearful phenomenon of a great military republic." "I confess that my own imagination," writes Mr. Merivale, "is most powerfully excited by the visible connection between moral influence and material authority which is presented, to an *extent never realized before or since,* by the phenomenon of the Roman Empire."* Niebuhr expresses still more fully the same sentiment. "The history of Rome has the highest claims to our attention. It shows us a nation, which was in its origin small as a grain of corn; but this originally small population waxed great, transferred its character to hundreds of thousands, and became the sovereign of nations from the rising to the setting sun. The whole of western Europe adopted the language of the Romans, and its inhabitants looked upon themselves as Romans. The laws and institutions of the Romans acquired such a power and durability, that even at the present moment they still continue to maintain their influence upon millions of men. *Such a development is without*

* *History of the Romans,* I., p. xiii.

a parallel in the history of the world. Before this star all others fade and vanish." *

The prophet is also struck with

THE TERRIBLENESS,

as well as with the singularity, of the fourth empire. The fourth beast was "terrible, terrible exceedingly" (vii. 7, 19). In touching upon this I am taking the features of the picture in the order in which they stand in the prophecy. I am not making selections but repeating in detail the words of this portion of Scripture. Is it not wonderful then to observe that history merely reproduces the picture previously drawn in the prophecy? I have already quoted Heeren's words about *"the fearful phenomenon"* presented by Rome. Schlegel speaks of the "fearful" rapidity of its progress, and Mommsen of its *"fearfully* strict military discipline." Merivale confesses that he contemplates the swift progress of the Roman arms "with awe and astonishment."

The cause of this astonishment will be more apparent as we proceed. The prophet speaks next of

THE STRENGTH

of the fourth empire. It was "powerful and strong exceedingly" (vi. 7); "The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron" (ii. 40). Here again we have one of the great outstanding features of the Roman empire. Menzel speaks of it as "a colossal empire of force." "In practised vigor and constancy under every privation," says Schlegel, "the Roman infantry, with the vigorous masses of its legion, surpassed all military bodies that have ever been organized." And again, "When even Hannibal, the most formidable adversary the Roman republic ever had to encounter, and the one

* *History of Rome,* I., p. 92.

who had most deeply studied its true character and the danger threatening the world from this quarter; when even he, after the many great victories which, in a long series of years, he had obtained over the Romans in the second Punic war, though he shook the power, was unable to break the spirit of this people: when this was the case one might regard the great political question of the then civilized world as settled; and it could no longer be a matter of doubt that that city, justly denominated STRENGTH, and which, even from of old, had been the idol of her sons (who accounted everything as nought in comparison with her interests): that that city, I say, was destined to conquer the world and establish an empire, the like whereof had never yet been founded by preceding conquerors." Even Gibbon accepts the language of the prophecy as the truest description of the unparalleled might of Rome. "The arms of the Republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and the images of gold, of silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the *iron* monarchy of Rome." *

The more closely we look the more do we recognize the truth of the prophetic picture. Behind the iron strength there was an iron nature. Its mark is everywhere. It is seen in their stern self-control. Laws were passed and enforced, for example, against the spread of luxury. Rufinus, who had held the high office of consul, was struck off the list of censors because he possessed silver plate to the value of £34. These laws entered even into the house of mourning, and prescribed how much might be spent in affording grief the melancholy satisfaction of showing honour to the dead. Mommsen speaks of their "stern and ener-

* *Fall of the Roman Empire,* chap. xxxviii.

getic morality." The iron was seen also in the discipline, to which the armies willingly submitted. Improvements were made in arms and in tactics, but there was no change in the stern discipline of Rome. "The old, fearfully strict, military discipline remained unaltered. Still, as formerly the general was at liberty to behead any man serving in his camp, and to scourge with rods the staff officer as well as the common soldier; nor were such punishments inflicted merely on account of common crimes, but also when an officer had allowed himself to deviate from the orders which he had received, or when a division had allowed itself to be surprised, or had fled from the field of battle." *

In the history of no other people do we find this union of stern, vigilant, authority, and voluntary, intelligent, submission. Nowhere besides do we mark the strength which this union gave. From the circumference to the centre of this people's life, from the far-off camps and battle-fields to the home, there is no alloy. It is the iron kingdom, standing alone through all history in its terribleness and grandeur. But when we have marked its peerless strength, we have to remember that from of old this word said it should be so: "the fourth kingdom shall be strong as **iron;**" it shall be "powerful and strong exceedingly."

But the prophet also notes

THE TYRANNOUS USE

which was made of the iron strength. "The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that crusheth all these (that is—gold, silver, and brass) shall it break in pieces and crush" (Dan. ii. 40). And, again, the fourth beast "devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet." This later vision was thus interpreted to the prophet. "The

* Mommsen; *History of Rome,* I., p. 454.

fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces" (Dan. vii. 7, 23).

The Romans were conscious of their mission. Virgil represents Æneas as thus addressed by the shade of Anchises:—

> Others belike with happier grace
> From bronze or stone shall call the face,
> Plead doubtful causes, map the skies,
> And tell when planets set or rise:
> But Roman, thou, do thou control
> The nations far and wide:
>
> Be this thy genius—to impose
> The rule of peace on vanquished foes,
> Show pity to the humblest soul
> And *crush the sons of pride.**

In connection with these lines, Bunsen remarks that the Romans "regarded the ruling of the world as a vocation entrusted to them by the gods, for the suppression of injustice upon the earth, and the obtaining of redress for the oppressed, the latter of course being those who appealed to the Romans for defence. Those who preferred independence were rebels, seditious. All who set themselves in opposition to the will of the civilizing, law-dispensing, divinities were regarded as barbarians."†

How they fulfilled what they believed to be their vocation, the whole world knows. Rome ever held her head on high as if she felt she was the world's Queen. She would make no peace with a victorious foe: she might be sore bestead, but she never acknowledged weakness. When Hannibal had shattered her dominion in Italy itself and was threatening her very existence, the donations sent by the king of Syracuse and

* *Æneid,* vi., Conington's translation.

† *God in History,* ii., pp. 363-364.

the Greek cities of Italy were declined courteously, but with unbending haughtiness. A more terrible trial awaited her. Her last army was annihilated at Cannae. On that fatal field 70,000 of her choicest sons lay cold and stiff, and her power seemed to have perished with them. But even then Rome would not despair nor give way to a moment's weakness. The cheek might pale, but the head was still erect, the step was firm. Only one of the generals escaped, the Consul Varro, the author of the disaster; "and the Roman senators met him at the gate and thanked him that he had not despaired of the salvation of his country. . . . The senate preserved its firm and unbending attitude while messengers from all sides hastened to Rome to report the loss of battles, the secession of allies, the capture of posts and magazines, and to ask for reinforcements for the valley of the Po, and for Sicily at a time when Italy was abandoned and Rome almost without a garrison. . . . The time of mourning for the fallen was restricted to 30 days that the service of the gods of joy, from which those clad in mourning were excluded, might not too long be interrupted—for so great was the number of the fallen that there was scarcely a family which had not to lament its dead."* Such was the scarcity of men fit for the field that, while calling out all above boyhood, Rome had to arm besides her debtors and criminals and slaves: yet at this very time when "Hannibal offered a release of captives at the expense of the Roman treasury it was declined, and the Carthaginian envoy who had arrived with the deputation of captives was not allowed to enter the city: nothing should look as if the senate thought of peace. Not only were the allies to be prevented from believing that Rome was disposed to enter into negotiations, but even the meanest citizen was to be made to understand that for him, as for all,

* Mommsen, *History of Rome,* ii., p. 137.

there was no peace, and that safety lay only in victory."*

As marked a feature as her refusal to make peace with a victorious enemy was her inability to bear the existence of a rival. Cato's "Delenda est Carthago" (Carthage must be blotted out), was simply a statement of the deliberate policy of Rome. Foes must be beaten: rivals must be crushed. Cato's decree was carried out by Scipio, one of the most humane Romans of his time, and this is the way in which the deed was done: "For seventeen days the city was in flames, and the numbers that were exterminated amounted to 700,000 souls, including the women and children sold into slavery: so that this scene of horror served as an early prelude to the later destruction of Jerusalem. . . . Whenever Roman interests were at stake, all mankind, and the lives of nations, were considered as of no importance."† "Scipio's letter to the senate is said to have contained no more than these words: 'Carthage is taken. The army awaits your further orders.' The tidings were received at Rome with uncommon demonstrations of joy. The victors recollecting all the passages of their former wars, the alarms which had been given by Hannibal and the irreconcilable antipathy of the two nations, gave orders to raze the fortifications of Carthage, and even to destroy the materials of which they were constructed."‡

Whatever Rome touched with a finger, was certain to be crushed at last beneath her feet. Judea is a familiar instance. Sorely pressed by the Greco-Syrian power, she placed herself in 160 B. C. under Roman protection. Not a hundred years after, in 63 B. C., Pompey, at the head of a triumphant army, is appointing whom he pleases to the throne and to the high-priesthood. In the year 7 A. D. the shadow

* *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138. † Schlegel, *Philosophy of History.*
‡ Ferguson, *History of the Roman Republic.*

of its independence has gone, and it is made a province of the Roman Empire. In 70 A. D. resistance is crushed by deluging the land with blood and turning it into a desert. The same policy was pursued in Greece. The Romans came as the enemies of tyrants and the restorers of the ancient freedom. That was, however, only the beginning of the story; it ended thus: "Rome, amid the rising hatred, did not deem herself secure until by one blow she had rid herself of all opponents of any importance. Above a thousand of the most eminent of the Achæans were summoned to Rome to justify themselves, and there detained seventeen years in prison without a hearing. . . The ultimate lot, both of Macedon and Greece, was decided by the system now adopted at Rome, that of converting the previous dependence of nations into formal subjection. The insurrection of Andriscus in Macedonia, an individual who pretended to be the son of Perseus, was quelled by Metellus, the country being constituted a Roman province; two years afterwards, at the sack of Corinth, vanished the last glimmer of Grecian freedom."* "It is curious to observe," says Arnold, "how, after every successive conquest, the Romans altered their behaviour to those allies who had aided them to gain it, and whose friendship or enmity was now become indifferent to them. Thus, after their first war with Philip, they slighted the Ætolians; after they had vanquished Antiochus, they readily listened to complaints against Philip; and now the destruction of Macedon enabled them to use the language of sovereigns rather than of allies to their oldest and most faithful friends, Eumenes, the Rhodians, and the Achæans. . . . Let it be for ever remembered that, by a decree of the senate, seventy towns of Epirus were given up

* Heeren.

to be plundered by the Roman army, after all hostilities were at an end; that falsehood and deceit were used to prevent resistance or escape; and that in one day and one hour seventy towns were sacked and destroyed, and one hundred and fifty thousand human beings sold for slaves."*

Wherever Rome imagined her interests were threatened she pursued the same terrible policy. "Two nations, the Teneteri and Usipetes, who had been driven out of their country by the Suevi, crossed the Rhine and demanded land from Cæsar, who, unwilling to tolerate so many warlike German tribes in Gaul, resolved to make a fearful example of them in order to deter others from crossing the frontier, and, treacherously seizing the German leader . . . . suddenly attacked his unsuspecting followers and drove them into the narrow tongue of land at the conflux of the Maes and the Rhine, where the greater part were either slaughtered, drowned, or taken prisoners."†

The Romans had suffered considerable annoyance and loss from the irruptions of the Tyrolese. A great power could not be expected to endure such insults with meekness. We should look for reprisals severe enough to prove that its friendship was more to be desired than its enmity. But the reader will hardly be prepared for the following tale of vengeance. "The Romans advanced from the Bodensee into the mountains and systematically exterminated the inhabitants. Every man fell sword in hand, and the women, maddened by despair, flung their children into the faces of the enemy. The Roman historian turns with horror from the monstrous crimes that blacken the page in which the destruction of the ancient inhabitants of the Tyrol by Tiberius, afterwards Emperor of Rome, is recorded."‡

* *Later Roman Commonwealth*, I., 19-20.

† Menzel, *History of Germany*. ‡ *Ibid.*

One of the noblest struggles for freedom was that carried on in Spain by Viriathus, "a simple Spanish countryman—whom after six years' war she could only rid herself of by assassination. The war nevertheless continued after his death against the Numantines, who would not be subjected, but were at last *destroyed* by Scipio Aemilianus."*

And let it not be supposed that these were incidents, the real nature of which the Romans sought in any way to conceal from public view. Such tales of bloodshed formed the special glory of their public men. It was inscribed in Pompey's honor on the temple of Minerva that "he sunk, or took, 846 ships; reduced 1,538 towns and fortresses; and vanquished, slew, or led into captivity 2,183,000 men. Herder speaks of "the blood-drenched soil of Roman glory," and sums up Roman history in two words—"Ravage and destruction." "It was," he says, "as if *the iron-footed god of war,* Aradivus, so highly revered from of old by the people of Romulus, actually bestrode the globe and at every step struck out new torrents of blood. . . There can be no doubt that if the Roman history were divested of its accustomed rhetoric, of all the patriotic maxims and trite sayings of politicians, and were presented with strict and minute accuracy in all its living reality, every humane mind would be deeply shocked at such a picture of tragic truth, and penetrated with the profoundest detestation and horror."†

The prophecy also notes that the hold of Rome upon the nations was not to be relaxed till their

SUBJUGATION WAS PERFECTED.

The fourth dominion was not only to devour and break in pieces: it was also to stamp the residue with its feet. Rome was resolved not only to con-

* Heeren. † Schlegel, *Philosophy of History.*

quer, but also to absorb, the whole world. Her colonies were planted in the conquered countries, breaking up their strength for resistance, and forming centres whence her language and her laws were forced upon the peoples. Her military highways, constructed with such solidity and skill that many of them remain to the present time, connected Rome with her most distant conquests and enabled her to pour in her legions wherever her safety or her honor might be threatened. And what her generals began her proconsuls and prætors perfected. "The highest military and civil powers," says Heeren, "were united in these governors; a principal cause of the horrible oppression which was soon felt. Troops were always kept up in the provinces, and the Latin language everywhere introduced (except only where Greek was spoken) that the inhabitants might be made as much like Romans as possible." In a word, she devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with her feet.

Here, as elsewhere, prophecy becomes the truest and tersest of all possible descriptions. The eye which here looked onward saw clearly and read deeply. But we are now to touch upon something still more wonderful. Those ancient words picture the political condition of

OUR OWN TIMES!

It will be observed that the prophecy professes to tell the history, as well as the character, of the fourth kingdom. We notice first that, though it was one dominion, it was nevertheless represented in the figure as twofold. In the case of the second dominion, represented by the arms and the breast of silver, it was indicated that the power originally twofold should, in process of time, become one. This was literally fulfilled in the Medes and Persians becoming one people. But in the part of the

figure, which was the symbol of the Roman power, this process appears to be reversed. What was originally one becomes two. It might be supposed that in pointing out this feature we are laying ourselves open to the charge of straining the words of Scripture, if not of profaning sacred things by childish trifling. Should any one view the matter in this light, let me remind him of one fact, before passing on. The Empire, originally one,

DID BECOME TWOFOLD.

The Emperor Diocletian, who improved upon the persecuting policy of his predecessors, and waged war against the Scriptures, ordering them to be searched for and destroyed, became the unconscious instrument by which this prediction was fulfilled. Feeling that the empire, whose destinies he guided, called for more than one man's thought and strength, he associated Maximian with himself in the government. Maximian received the western provinces, while Diocletian retained the eastern for himself. This division was made in 287 A. D., and was continued with but slight interruption till the western empire was overthrown by Odoacer in 476 A. D. The eastern finally fell in the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. The best comment on this part of the prophecy is found in the division which all historians recognize. The one dominion of Rome becomes at length the *empires* of the East and of the West.

But there was to be a further subdivision. As we have already seen, it was predicted that the fourth kingdom was not to be supplanted by any other dominion of man, but was

TO ENDURE IN ITS FRAGMENTS

till the time of the end. Attention is directed in the vision given to Nebuchadnezzar to *the toes of the*

image. "The toes of the feet" are spoken of as kings or kingdoms—which "shall not cleave one to another," and in whose days "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people" (Dan. ii. 41-44).

Now we know that this word has remained unaltered and untouched since the beginning of the Christian era. We know also that for well-nigh five centuries afterwards the word was unfulfilled. There were two empires, but there was no further subdivision. We know, too, that for ages the prediction has been fulfilled to the very letter. The two have become many. It has not been a merely temporary condition. Neither wars, nor intermarriages, nor alliances, tried though they have all been, have availed to re-unite the fragments and restore the ancient unity of the empire. The manifold division has proved to be a permanent condition, and the historical development of the fourth dominion has proceeded exactly as this prediction foretold it should do.

Were it possible to explain this away as merely a strange coincidence, there is more that calls for notice and explanation. The prophecy

TEACHES US TO READ OUR OWN HISTORY.

We may know much regarding the various nationalities scattered over what was once the Roman empire, without having any right conception of our and their relation to ancient Rome. It may seem to us that the empire has been supplanted by the nations, and has passed utterly away. The prophecy, on the other hand, declares that the fourth dominion still abides, that Rome still lives. The separate dominions are only its development; the nations are its fragments, partaking of its nature and continuing its existence.

We need not argue as to which of these views is correct. The testimony of those who have studied the history of the past is that Rome lives on. "The public reason of the Romans has been silently or studiously transfused into the domestic institutions of Europe, and the laws of Justinian still command the respect or obedience of independent nations."* Even the outward continuity remained unbroken. "Gothic and other chiefs gave themselves the name of Roman Patricians, and at a later date the Roman empire was restored." Clovis received from Constantinople the titles of Consul and Patrician, and by that means reconciled the people of his Roman conquests to his sway. Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of Rome by Leo III., the Roman bishop. And this was no unmeaning form. "A seal," says Hallam, "was put to the glory of Charlemagne when Leo III., in the name of the Roman people, placed upon his head the imperial crown. His father, Pepin, had, in 800, borne the title of Patrician, and he had himself exercised, with that title, a regular sovereignty over Rome. Money was coined in his name, and an oath of fidelity was taken by the clergy and the people. But the appellation of Emperor seemed to place his authority over all his subjects on a new footing. It was full of high and indefinite pretensions, tending to overshadow the free election of the Franks by a fictitious descent from Augustus. A fresh oath of fidelity to him as Emperor was demanded from his subjects." The Church, by this time thoroughly Romanized, rose into power as the Empire fell, and, along with the faith which it gave to the conquerors, handed down the Roman culture. Roman law continued its hold, and Roman institutions lived on among the people. "Considering attentively," says Hegel, "how many of the old institutions continued to subsist, and studying the feelings

* Gibbon.

of that time, as they are faintly preserved in its scanty records, it seems hardly too much to say that in the 8th century the Roman empire still existed in the West; existed in men's minds as a power, weakened, delegated, suspended, but not destroyed."*

To these I may add a more recent and not less weighty testimony. "If the historian of Rome," writes Freeman, "is bound to look back, still more is he bound to look onwards. He has but to cast his eye on the world around him to see that Rome is still a living and abiding power. The tongue of Rome is the groundwork of the living speech of south-western Europe; it shares our own vocabulary with the tongue of our Teutonic fathers. The tongue of Rome is still the ecclesiastical language of half Christendom; the days are hardly past when it was the common speech of science and learning. The law of Rome is still quoted in our courts and taught in our Universities; in other lands it forms the source and groundwork of their whole jurisprudence. Little more than half a century has passed since an Emperor of the Romans, tracing his unbroken descent from Constantine and Augustus, still held his place among European sovereigns, and, as Emperor of the Romans, still claimed precedence over every meaner potentate. And the title of a Roman office, the surname of a Roman family, is still the highest object of human ambition, still clutched at alike by worn-out dynasties and by successful usurpers. Go eastward, and the whole diplomatic skill of Europe is taxed to settle the affairs of a Roman colony, which, cut off alike by time and distance, still clings to its Roman language and glories in its Roman name. We made war but yesterday upon a power whose badge is the Roman eagle, on behalf of one whose capital has not yet lost the official title of New Rome. Look below the sur-

* *Philosophy of History.*

face, and the Christian subjects of the Porte are found called and calling themselves Romans; go beyond the Tigris, and their master himself is known to the votary of Allah simply as the Roman Cæsar."*

The kingdoms of to-day are, therefore, as this prophecy pictured them, divisions and continuations of the Roman Empire. There are two other features in the picture which, to say the least, are certainly not less noteworthy.

THE NUMBER OF THE KINGDOMS

as they will be found at "the time of the end" is definitely stated. These are represented, as we have seen, by "the toes" of the image, and in the second vision the fourth beast is pictured as having "ten horns." The horn in the Old Testament is the symbol of power, and the meaning of this part of the figure evidently is that the fourth dominion would finally develop into ten "powers." That this is the meaning is placed beyond doubt by the explanation—"As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise" (Dan. vii. 24).

As we look back over the recent history of Europe we must be struck by the fact that this part of the prophecy is being rapidly

FULFILLED IN OUR OWN TIMES.

The fragments of the fourth dominion are assuming their final shape. The last line of division between the eastern and western empires passed along what is now the western boundary of Austria, down through the Adriatic, and across the Mediterannean, striking the coast of Africa to the west of Cyrene. If we are to follow the indications of the first vision, we shall expect to find five kingdoms in each of the two empires. What then is their present condition?

* *Historial Essays*—Second Series, pp. 291, 292.

It has to be borne in mind that the northern limits of the Roman dominion were the Rhine and the Danube. Russia, Norway and Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, are, therefore, excluded from our reckoning. A few years ago we should have looked in vain in the empire of the West for the five powers of the prophecy. But Germany, which was previously divided into five kingdoms and numerous principalities, has latterly become one empire; and Italy, which was similarly subdivided, is now also a single kingdom. These changes, which have been among the surprises of modern history, give us in the old empire of the west eight kingdoms—Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy. Three of these, Belgium, Switzerland, and Portugal, will no doubt soon cease to exist as separate powers, and we *shall then have the five "powers" foretold by the prophecy.* Recent changes have also paved the way for its fulfilment in the eastern division of the empire. We can already mark the lines of a fivefold division there. There are Austria, the Danubian Principalities, Greece, Turkey, and Egypt. Is it not marvellous that we should now have, not only the indication of a tenfold division of the fourth dominion, but also of five kingdoms in each of the two great divisions of the old Roman empire?

All these marvels are excelled, however, by another, which I may describe as a miracle of insight. The parts of the image which represent the four dominions regularly

INCREASE IN STRENGTH.

The gold is softer than the silver, the silver than the brass, the brass than the iron. Special attention is directed to this feature in the case of the fourth kingdom. It "shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and

as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush" (Dan. ii. 40). But the kingdoms also sustain another relationship to each other. They as regularly

DECREASE IN VALUE.

Attention is called to this fact in the case of the second kingdom. The prophet said to the king, "Thou art the head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (Dan. ii. 39).

It will be evident that the statement of this double relationship indicates discrimination of a most thorough-going character. We know that in the case of the Greek and Roman kingdoms, at any rate, the prediction was fulfilled. The brass was stronger than the gold and the silver; and the iron was also stronger than the brass. And this, it need hardly be remarked, was not a necessity. It was not necessary that each succeeding kingdom should be stronger than that which went before it. A great kingdom may, in the hour of its weakness, fall a prey to one which, in the fulness of its vigor, it would have regarded as a contemptible adversary. But this was not to be the story of the future. The kingdoms were to increase in strength, and the last was to be the strongest of them all. We are now met, however, by the startling paradox that these dominions as they increase in strength will decrease in value, and that the strongest of them all will be the least precious! It has been already pointed out that, in the king's vision, history is read from the view-point of ambition. We see the future as it is scanned by a Nebuchadnezzar or a Napoleon. Our eye rests on the mighty prizes which lie in the pathway of conquest. But, while this explains why the kingdoms are described in regard to their strength and their value, it increases our difficulty. Surely, we say, to the

ambitious man the stronger kingdom must necessarily be the more valuable, and the strongest the most precious of all. Yet, instead of this, the silver of the second is explained as indicating an inferior dominion to the first, and consequently the iron of the fourth must be taken as indicating that the last and strongest was the least precious of the four.

This point seems to have quite escaped the notice of commentators, and there is no help to be had in consulting *them*. Turning again to the prophecy *the meaning* is plain. The dominions *so differ in character* that he, who possesses the first, holds what will yield to ambition a fuller satisfaction than can be known in the possession of any of the others. To the man of ambition—the man who lusts after lordship over his fellows—the first dominion is more precious than the second, the second than the third, the third than the fourth. But, while the meaning is plain, its plainness does not remove our difficulty. Why should the strength of the dominions be in inverse ratio to their value? Why should those qualities not increase or decrease together?

When my attention was first attracted to this feature in the prophecy, it seemed to me that light might be found in the writings of those who dealt with Universal History, and of such especially as dealt with it philosophically. The search which was then entered upon was not in vain. There is one book for which we are indebted to one of Germany's deepest thinkers, and which deserves, beyond any other that has ever been written, the name of a "Philosophy of History." Its merits have been widely recognized, and have been as freely admitted by the opponents, as they have been loudly proclaimed by the disciples, of the writer. I refer to the well-known work of Hegel. Morell says of it: "Hegel has given us many views of great originality. His 'Philosophy of History' is especially valuable, as

containing investigations into the peculiar characteristics of the different ages of the world, that throw great light upon the intellectual progress of civilization."* Emil Palleske gives it still higher praise. He refers, in his life of Schiller, to Kant's treatise on "Ideas for a Universal History considered in a cosmopolitan light," and says: "Kant in this compares himself to Kepler, and wished that he might have a Newton as a successor. Hegel became this Newton."†

Turning now to his "Philosophy of History," we find that it covers the entire field described in the prophecy. It contains no reference whatever, it may be said, to the words of Scripture, and there is in Hegel's mind apparently not the remotest thought of them. But the problem, if we may so call it, is the same. Hegel contemplates the History of man as a whole. He sees in those successive dominions, or rather in the conception of human freedom which each embodies, the advancing steps of a continuous development. The first thing which strikes us is that the number of these stages is identical with that in the Book of Daniel. There are *five* developments. There is the childhood, the boyhood, the youth, the manhood, and the old age of history, the last not being weakness, but full maturity. Then these five are divided *exactly as in the prophecy.* There are four dominions of man, and one of God in man. Hegel saw that in Christianity civilization had reached a stage which it never had attained before, and that, when Christianity shall have done its work and permeated all social and political relationships, the last and highest stage of man's development will be reached.

Even these coincidences are astonishing. They prove that the Scripture looking forward and the

* *History of Modern Philosophy*, ii., pp. 154-155. † Vol. ii., p. 32.

philosopher looking back have seen the same things. But we have not exhausted Hegel's testimony. He deals with kingdoms, not because he desires to trace their conquests or record the influence which they exerted over mankind, but merely because it is only when men have been gathered into states that the march of civilization begins. It is with this civilization that he concerns himself. What were the ideas whch lay beneath it, and moulded it, and gave it its distinctive form? As Hegel looked back over the past he saw one form emerging ever more fully from surrounding darkness and mist; it was the form of Freedom. Men did not at first realize—at least, as we find them congregated together in states—all that they were as men. The state was in the beginning merely an enlargement of the family. Sovereignty was looked upon as invested with all the rights, and hedged round about with all the sanctity, of fatherhood. The king was the father in whose care all confided, whose frown they dreaded, and in whose smile they rejoiced. He alone was free; the duty of every other was submission to his will.

That was

THE CHILDHOOD OF HISTORY.

Hegel finds the fullest illustration of it in China. The ancient economy of Babylon was almost wholly unknown in Hegel's time, and he makes only a passing reference to it; but I shall show that every feature, which he notes in the condition of China has its parallel in that of the Assyrio-Babylonian monarchy. And we now understand the reason of the similarity. Recent investigations have shown that the Chinese are the descendants of the Accadians to whom Babylonia owed its civilisation. Hegel dwells upon the slavery of the family relations in China: "The duties of the family are absolutely binding and established and regulated by law. The

son may not accost the father when he comes into the room; he must seem to contract himself to nothing at the side of the door, and may not leave the room without the father's permission."* With this compare the following: "A tablet in the British Museum contains a fragment of the civil war, in a double text—Turanian-Chaldæan and Semitic-Assyrian—on the subject of the rights and reciprocal duties of husbands and wives, fathers and children. From this we find that the Assyrian family was constituted on the basis of the most absolute and uncontrolled power of the husband and the father."† Then of China Hegel says: "The patriarchal relation is predominant, and the government is based upon the paternal management of the emperor, who keeps all departments of the State in order. . . . He is the patriarch, and everything in the State that can make any claim to reverence is attached to him . . . The emperor, as he is the supreme head of the State, is also the chief of its religion."‡ Lenormant, referring to the king's humility in the presence of the gods, says, "But this man, who was so humble in the presence of the gods, held in his hands, with regard to other men, the double power, spiritual and temporal; he was both a sovereign pontiff and an autocrat; he was called the vicegerent of the gods on earth; and his authority, thus emanating from a divine source, was as absolute over the soul as over the body."||

One more twofold quotation will complete the picture: "Besides the imperial dignity there is properly no elevated rank, no nobility among the Chinese; only the princes of the imperial house and the sons of the ministers enjoy any precedence of the kind, and they rather by their position than by their

* *Philosophy of History*, p. 127. † Lenormant, *Ancient History of the East*, vol. i., p. 425. ‡ *Philosophy of History*, pp. 126, 129, 137. || *Ancient History*, vol. i., p. 418.

birth. Otherwise all are equal. . . . And though there is no distinction conferred by birth, and everyone can attain the highest dignity, this very equality testifies to no triumphant assertion of the worth of the inner man, but a servile consciousness—one which has not yet matured itself so far as to recognize distinctions."* Of the Assyrio-Babylonian civilization Lenormant speaks in exactly similar terms: "In Assyria there were no castes, nor even rigorously defined classes, no hereditary or established aristocracy. There was complete social equality, such equality as despotism desires and establishes as most favorable to its own existence—an equality with a common level created by the yoke that bears equally on all, where there is no superiority but that of offices established by the will, often by the caprice, of an absolute master."†

This, then, is what Hegel has well described as the Childhood of history, when all is simple and trustful. Here all right and power centre in the monarch. "Individuals remain as mere accidents. These revolve round the monarch, who as patriarch . . . stands at the head. . . . All the riches of imagination are appropriated to that dominant existence in which subjective freedom is essentially merged; the latter looks for its dignity *not* in itself, but in that absolute object."‡ Could there be a finer comment on the words, "Thou, O king, art this head of gold;" or on these others, "The most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar . . . a kingdom, and majesty and glory and honour, and for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up, and whom he

* *Philosophy of History*, pp. 130, 145. † *Ancient History*, vol. i., p. 423. ‡ *Philosophy of History*, i., p. 111.

would he put down" (Dan. v. 18, 19)? On the one side there was the most despotic sway, on the other the deepest reverence, the most willing and unlimited obedience. To the lust of ambition what nobler prize ever presented itself than to press back the boundaries of such a dominion till they were conterminous with the world, and thus to become the centre of all earthly power, the source of all earthly beneficence, the one object of human reverence, whose thoughts to all men were wisdom, whose will was unquestioned law? He who swayed this sceptre ruled as a god upon the earth. He received as a spontaneous offering from men, in the childhood of their history, what afterwards the world's wealth could not buy, nor the terrors of the sword compel. This was the prize of "fine gold."

The Persian dominion constitutes

"THE BOYHOOD OF HISTORY,

no longer manifesting the repose and trustingness of the child, but boisterous and turbulent."* The consciousness of freedom, or rather of human equality, begins to dawn. In the comparatively pure religion taught by Zoroaster another mighty presence was recognized, before whom king and subject had alike to bow. "Ormuzd is the Lord of Light. . . He is the excellent, the good, the positive in all natural and spiritual existence."† The result of this purer faith was twofold. It was seen in the toleration of the Persian empire. The kingdoms are left with their own religions, institutions, and laws, and there is no longer any attempt to make the king the temporal and spiritual head of all mankind.‡ Nebuchadnezzar commands men of all nationalities to fall down and worship the image which he sets up, and is quite unable to comprehend the scruples

**Philosophy of History,* p. 112. † *Ibid.,* p. 186. ‡ *Ibid.,* p. 120.

of the few pious Jews who refuse their adoration; while Cyrus and succeeding Persian kings assist in rebuilding the Jewish Temple. The *King* was therefore less to the subject nations in this second than he had been in the preceding dominion.

But there was another result—the relation between the monarch and his own people was changed. "The Persians," says Hegel, "stood with one foot on their ancestral territory, with the other on their foreign conquests In his ancestral land the king was a friend among friends, and as if surrounded by equals."* The king had therefore become less to his own people than the Babylonian monarch had been among his. But, while this was so, it was as yet only the boyhood of the race. The glorious form of liberty was but dimly seen, and the spirit of slavery and tyranny was still unexpelled. "The subject nations," says Heeren, "were treated as property, and were called slaves, in contrast with the Persians, who on their side were called freemen. Such was the relation of the nations towards each other: towards the king the Persians were as little free as the others." But the hand now laid upon the nations was mightier than that which they had felt before; for this was, in a word, government by a *dominant race,* whereas in the previous case it had been government by a dominant personality. The provinces were now held by Persian satraps. The nations were led into battle, not by their own princes, but by Persian generals. The monarch no longer stood among all the peoples and tribes of his dominion the one central power and splendour. He was king of the Persians, and they controlled for him the rest. Even to his own he was not the gorgeous personality which the Babylonian king had been. This second throne was still a great prize for ambition, but it was less than the first. And yet, as the king was

* *Ibid.*, p. 196.

thus multiplied, so to speak, into a nation, the one into the many, it necessarily held the dominion with a firmer grasp. It was the silver, less precious, but stronger, than the gold.

The third era—the Grecian—is

THE YOUTH OF HISTORY.

"The Greek world may be compared," say Hegel, "with the period of adolescence, for here we have individualities forming themselves."* Freedom had its birth among the Greeks, and their tenacious grasp of this principle lay at the root of their glory and strength. Union and subordination were to some extent necessary in their predatory excursions, and in their contests with neighbouring cities and states; but they jealously guarded the gift of freedom. Their hatred of a master still breathes its scornful defiance in that word "tyrant," which they have bequeathed to us. Here it was no longer THE ONE who was free, but THE MANY. Among such men the king could only be a general; and even this rank he could hold only in virtue of his kingly nature. "The relation of princes to subjects," says Hegel, "we learn best from Homer. . . . Their subjects obeyed them, not as distinguished from them by conditions of caste, nor as in a state of serfdom, nor in the patriarchal relation, nor yet as the result of the express necessity for a constitutional government, but only from the need, universally felt, of being held together and of obeying a ruler accustomed to command. The prince has just so much personal authority as he possesses the ability to acquire and to assert."† It was the commanding intellect alone that could be monarch here, for from feeble hands the reins would soon have been torn. Even under Alexander, the Grecian armies were remarkable for their insolence and insubordination. The strength,

* *Philosophy of History*, p. 112. † *Ibid.*, p. 239.

however, which lay in this consciousness of freedom was immense. Nothing could daunt its proud and noble daring. He who held this dominion controlled a power which was then irresistible; for he led an army of *men*. But his glory was less than that of the world conquerors who had preceded him; for he ruled, not over sons, but brothers; not over slaves, but freemen. The brass was stronger, and yet less precious, than the silver and the gold.

We come now to

THE MANHOOD OF HISTORY,

the Roman State. In the Grecian idea of freedom there was caprice, and, consequently, turbulence and disorganization. Each man was a law to himself. This idea sufficed for the youth; but upon the man there now broke the majestic vision of a LAW outside man's will, to which the will must be subjected, and by which, in return, freedom was guarded. Speaking of this distinction, Hegel says: "The Romans completed this important separation, and discovered a principle of right which is external; that is, one not dependent on disposition and sentiment."* We know how law was reverenced among them. "In order to obtain a nearer view of this spirit, we must," says Hegel again, "pay particular attention to the conduct of the plebs in times of revolt against the patricians. How often, in insurrection and anarchical disorder, were the plebs brought back into a state of tranquility by a mere form, and cheated of the fulfillment of its demands, righteous or unrighteous!"†

But Rome went further. The will was bowed to one abstraction—Law: the whole passion and strength of the Roman nature were given to another—the State. "True manhood acts neither in

* *Ibid.*, p. 300. † *Ibid.*, p. 298.

accordance with the caprice of a despot, nor in obedience to a graceful caprice of its own, but works for a general aim—*one in which the individual perishes,* and realizes his own private object only in that general aim. Free *individuals* are sacrificed to the severe demands of the *national* objects to which they must surrender themselves in this service of abstract generalization."* The Roman did not give up his liberty to a master, but he resigned it willingly to the State.

It may be well to notice how fully all this is borne out by the great master of Roman history, who had as little thought of supporting Hegel as of supplying materials for a comment on Scripture. The Romans, says Mommsen, were "A free people, understanding the duty of obedience, disowning all mystic ideas of Divine right, absolutely equal in the eye of the law and one with another."† "Wherever in Hellas a tendency towards national union appeared, it was based, not on influences directly political, but on games and art: the contests at Olympia, the poems of Homer, the tragedies of Euripides, were the only bonds that held Hellas together. Resolutely, on the other hand, the Italian surrendered his own personal will for the sake of freedom, and learned to obey his father that he might know how to obey the State. In such subjection as this, individual development might be marred, and the germs of fairest promise in man might be arrested in the bud; the Italian gained instead a feeling of fatherland and of patriotism such as the Greek never knew, and, alone among all the civilized nations of antiquity, succeeded in working out national unity in connection with a constitution based on self-government—a national unity, which at last placed in his hands the supremacy, not only over the divided Hellenic stock, but over the whole known

* *Ibid.,* pp. 113-114. † *History of Rome,* i., p. 85.

world."* "Life, in the case of the Roman, was spent under conditions of austere restraint, and, the nobler he was, the less he was a free man. . . . But, while the individual had neither the wish nor the power to be ought else than a member of the community, the glory and the might of that community was felt by every individual citizen as a personal possession to be transmitted along with his name and his homestead, to his posterity."†

This voluntary self-surrender became a worship. The highest praise which the Roman coveted was to have it solemnly declared that he had deserved well of his country. Kings, consuls, tribunes, emperors were but the *servants* of the state. Their individual glory was absorbed in the surpassing glory of that abstraction: the man was overshadowed by the thing.

Even the glory of the Emperors had to be veiled: "The Cæsar was in truth," says Dr. Freeman, "an absolute monarch. But in theory he was only a citizen, a senator, a magistrate. The Emperor gave his vote in the Senate like another Senator, as Prince of the Senate he gave the first vote; but it was open either to patriots or to subtle flatterers to vote another way. His household was like that of any other Roman noble; he mixed with other Roman nobles on terms of social equality; he had no crowns and sceptres, no bendings of the knee, no titles of Majesty or Highness. . . . He was a monarch who reigned without a particle of royal show."‡ It is well known how fully Augustus recognised the fact that personal pretensions would be utterly destructive of this enormous power, and how assiduously he cast away everything which would proclaim him the world's master. "The emperors," writes Hegel, "conducted themselves in the enjoy-

* *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31. † *Ibid.*, iii., p. 394.

‡ *Historical Essays*—Second Series, pp. 372-373.

ment of their power with perfect simplicity, and did not surround themselves with pomp and splendour in Oriental fashion. We find in them traits of simplicity which astonish us. Thus, for example, Augustus writes a letter to Horace, in which he reproaches him for having failed to address any poem to him, and asks him whether he thinks that that would disgrace him with posterity."* He ordered a palace, which had been built by his daughter Julia, to be pulled down because of its splendour.

"It was not individual genius," says Mommsen, "that ruled in Rome, and through Rome in Italy, but the one immovable idea of a policy—propagated from generation to generation in the Senate. Immense successes were thus obtained at an immense price. In the Roman commonwealth nothing specially depended on any one man, either on soldier or general, and under the rigid discipline of its moral police all the idiosyncracies of human character were extinguished. Rome reached a greatness such as no other state of antiquity attained; but she dearly purchased her greatness at the sacrifice of the graceful variety, of the easy *abandon,* and of the inward freedom of Hellenic life."† It was no longer their fellow-creature whom men served and for whom they sacrificed themselves; it was ROME. The highest place left for ambition was simply to be the first and greatest servant of the State. But the power which the stern, deep, devotion of the strong Roman soul placed in that servant's hand was the mightiest and most terrible the world had ever seen. There was nothing it would not dare; there was nothing it could not do. Though less precious to ambition, the iron was stronger than the gold, and the silver, and the brass.

So far the agreement is remarkable, but Hegel

* *Philosophy of History,* p. 326. † I., p. 471.

renders it absolutely complete. He notes a fifth and last stage in the development, which he calls

THE OLD AGE OF HISTORY.

He explains himself thus: "The old age of *nature* is weakness; but that of the *spirit* is its perfect maturity and strength. . . . The fourth phase" —it must be remembered that Hegel's fourth is our fifth, as he reckons the first and second stages, his own "childhood" and "boyhood" of history, as one —"the fourth phase BEGINS WITH THE RECONCILIATION PRESENTED BY CHRISTIANITY BUT ONLY IN THE GERM, WITHOUT NATIONAL OR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT." When Christianity has permeated the national and political life, the fifth kingdom will be established; in other words, the crowning development of history, the "germ" of which is already with us, is "the kingdom of God." It only remains to add that, as is implied in the prophecy which pictures the stone falling not only upon the iron but also upon the brass, the silver, and the gold, the various forms of past civilisation still remain. Their hour of might has passed away, but they themselves still exist. The gold has still its representative in China and elsewhere; the silver in such countries as Russia and Turkey; the brass in such a republic as Switzerland; the iron in those commonwealths where, in addition to Grecian freedom, there is the Roman unity and subordination.

This, it will be observed, is not the testimony of distinguished opinion, but of facts. The facts were there though it needed genius to discern and make them manifest to us. But what of the Book in which all was written from of old? How was it that, more than three-and-twenty centuries before Hegel was born, and when the past he was afterwards to read had just begun to be, Time's entire

story was already written, its developments numbered, its epochs clearly marked, and their inmost meaning declared? By whom was it that the future was so deeply searched and so fully made known? There can be but one reply. In a dull and cloudy day the very light around us, subdued though it be, compels the belief that the sun, though we do not see him, is shining in the sky. But when the veil of clouds has been rolled away, and his full radiance is poured upon us, there is no more room for inference or argument: every eye must note his glory. And so here we behold in unveiled splendour that full inspiration of the Divine Spirit, the presence of which we feel in every one of those words that search the hidden things of man's heart and the deep things of God—an inspiration which no lowly heart will ever try to explain away, and which, in the face of these "abiding miracles of prophecy," no honest mind will seek to deny. And not only does it demonstrate the full inspiration of Scripture, it proves that God reigns in the earth and guides it on to good. It reminds us that, as the past has accomplished His will, so the present and the future will hasten the world's salvation. The stone, miraculous in its origin, cut out of the mountain-side without hands, will yet smite the toes of the image and grind the whole of it to powder. Christ will come again, and righteousness and love and peace will bless the earth, which man's dominions have mocked and scourged. Let us interpret the earth's need and lift the cry, "Thy Kingdom come"! Let us yield ourselves, and let Him reign in us now, so that when He does come, it may not be with condemnation but with joy.

CHAPTER IX.

PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN THE COMING, THE HISTORY, AND THE WORK OF CHRIST.

The evidence, with which we have hitherto been dealing, has been accumulating around one or two points. Whatever doubts we may have entertained regarding the existence of God and the authority of the Scriptures, we make bold to say that the study of the predictions discussed in these pages is calculated to result in deep and abiding conviction. No one can compare those forecasts, so minute and circumstantial, with their complete fulfilment so many ages afterwards, and not feel assured that God is, and that His power is round us now, and that the Bible, wondrous in so many ways besides, finds its explanation in this alone—that it is His word to us.

This might have been enough to lead us to accept its testimony regarding the person and work of Jesus Chrust. A piece of metal, said to be gold, is placed in the hands of a jeweller. He applies his tests here and there with satisfactory results, and then accepts the whole without the slightest misgiving that it is what it was declared to be. A messenger comes with important intelligence. If it is true, it ought to be acted upon at once. There may be no means at hand of directly testing its truth, but it may be possible to determine whether the messenger is trustworthy or not. His story may be sifted, or he may bear cre-

dentials, the production of which will banish every shadow of doubt. The Bible comes offering us in God's name salvation through Christ. If that is indeed God's offer, it calls for immediate and grateful acceptance. Now, for determining whether it is of God, we repeat that such evidence as we have already before us might have been enough. We have tested the Scripture and found it to be truth. The credentials of this messenger have been produced, and these have settled the question whether the message is from God.

But we are not compelled to rest upon that testimony. Direct evidence that this message of grace is indeed of God, has been given in ungrudged abundance, and the wonders of prophecy have been made to cluster round what is really the central truth of Scripture. Before touching, however, upon these predictions, it is needful to say a word or two regarding the age of the Old Testament Scriptures. We have hitherto been content with the admission that they are as old as the beginning of the Christian era. In dealing with predictions which were accomplished long after that period, and even in our own time, nothing more was required. But in taking up predictions, which were fulfilled at that very point in the world's history, this admission is no longer sufficient. Can it be placed beyond the possibility of disproof or of doubt, that there was such an interval between the prophecy and the events it foretold, that no human foresight can account for its existence?

Fortunately this point can be settled briefly and conclusively. There is no need for any prolonged discussion, or for any long array of proofs. The books of the Old Testament were translated into Greek, at least two hundred years before the birth of our Lord. The Septuagint version, so called because the work of translation was done by about seventy learned Jews, was everywhere in use among the Jews, who

were scattered throughout the Roman Empire long before the Christian era began. Philo, who was born some thirty years before Christ, speaks of the translation as already ancient, and mentions that an annual festival was observed at Alexandria in commemoration of the work. "Even to this very day," he says, "there is every year a solemn assembly held, and a festival celebrated, in the island of Pharos, to which not only the Jews but a great number of persons of other nations sail across, reverencing the place in which the first light of interpretation shone forth, and thanking God for that ancient piece of beneficence which was always young and fresh."

There is no reason, then, to doubt that the translation was begun in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus about 280 B. C., and that it was completed not long after. We might, therefore, have insisted upon an earlier date than 200 B. C. for the origin of the Greek version. We might have argued also that, seeing the translation was then made, the books of the Old Testament must be admitted to be still older; for they must have been received and venerated as God's word long before the necessity was felt for translating them from the Hebrew into that tongue, which the conquests of Alexander had made the universal language of the time. But it is enough for our purpose to take the smallest interval which can be assigned, and we content ourselves, therefore, with the admission that the prophecies were completed and in men's hands two centuries before our Lord appeared. The admission is more than enough. Who can look down through the next fifty years, or even the next twenty, and describe the changes they will bring? And two centuries! Who could lift the veil made of those two hundred years, and paint as clearly and livingly as we see them now the things which were then to be?

The predictions with which we are now to deal, seem to me sufficient on the very face of them to prove

the claims of the Old Testament Scriptures and of Christianity. Everyone admits that they are woven into the very fabric of the Old Testament. "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy." All are aware that, though the light of the Old Testament was at first confined to Israel, it proclaimed from the very beginning a "larger hope." The better time, for which Israel looked, was to be a time of blessing for all mankind. The blessing was to spring up in Israel, but it was not to be confined to Israel. Jew and Gentile were alike to rejoice. A new covenant was to be made with men, not like that which had been made with Israel at Sinai and which had never uprooted sin from the heart. The Spirit of God was to be poured out upon all flesh. The nations were to cast away their idols; for the light was to shine from Zion, and the law of the Lord was to go forth from Jerusalem.

We are so familiar with these and the like predictions that references are unnecessary. But familiarity may conceal their marvellousness. We are all aware that in those old times the knowledge of the true God was confined to the narrow territory of the Jews; that each people had its own gods; and that the idea of a nation exchanging its religion for another was quite foreign to the experience and to the thought of the ancient world. Is it not wonderful then to find the hope burning on in the Old Testament Scriptures, and brightening as the ages advance, that a day would come when the idolatries of the nations would be numbered with the things of the past, that the God of Israel would be worshipped and served in far-off lands, and that distant isles would wait for His law? That expectation is absolutely without parallel. There is nothing like it in any literature besides. Neither philosopher nor poet had ever dreamed of a brotherhood of man founded upon universal sonship to God. How then is it that we find this in the Old Testament Scriptures not only as an aspiration, but as a clear and

oft-repeated prediction, a confident and jubilant expectation? Whence was it that this idea, which never stirred in human heart besides, fell upon the soil of Jewish thought? How did it happen that it remained and flourished so that to pour this light upon the nations was regarded as the destiny of the Jewish people? But add to this that, as these Scriptures said it should be, so it has been. The idolatries of the nations have disappeared and are disappearing now. The knowledge of the true God has broken forth like a flood over the darkened earth. The far-off isles have received His law. And this light, which has enlightened the nations, has shone out from Zion, this law has gone forth from Jerusalem. Put the strange prediction and its wondrous accomplishment together, and shall we not say that both are from God? Can any one fail to see that the Word and the Work, the Old Testament and Christianity, are here alike stamped with God's seal?

But there is more to account for than this strange, confident outlook and its equally strange fulfilment. There was one central figure in Israel's hope; the leading back of the nations to God was to be

THE WORK OF ONE MAN.

All know how this is stamped upon every promise of the world's redemption. From first to last it is to be the work of the Messiah. It is *He* who is to bruise the serpent's head. In *Him* all the nations of the earth are to be blessed. "All kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him. . . . He shall have pity on the poor and needy, and the souls of the needy He shall save. . . . His name shall endure for ever" (Ps. lxxii). The world's salvation begins, is continued, and perfected in Him. So clearly is this taught in the Old Testament that the hope of the Jews became the hope of the Messiah. The following are some of the petitions in their ancient prayers: "O that

Elias would come quickly with Messias the son of David;" "Send the Branch of David in our days;" "By the hand of Ben Issai (the son of Jesse) the Bethlehemite bring near the redemption; How long will He tarry;" "Let the memory of Messias, the son of David, thy servant, come before Thee." Numerous as are the quotations from the Old Testament, which are applied to Jesus in the New, they are far outnumbered by the passages applied to the Messiah in the Rabbinical writers. They believed that it was the one purpose of the Scripture to testify of Him. "The Jewish doctors tell us 'that all the prophets, none excepted, prophesied only of the years of the redemption, and the days of the Messiah.' 'All from Moses our Master,' says Maimonides, 'to Malachi of blessed memory.' 'They all,' says Abarbanel, 'moved by the Holy Ghost, testify and foretell the coming of the Messiah.' "*

This, then, was the hope of the Old Testament. It was contained in books which we and the Jews alike revere to this day, and which were translated into the Greek tongue two centuries before Christ came. It was so clearly and emphatically announced, it was so frequently declared, that it filled the thought of the Jewish people with glowing anticipation. And it was an expectation which from first to last rested upon one man. It was not a blessing which was to come men knew not whence, nor how. They looked for the Messiah. The hope of Israel and of all peoples lay in Him. He alone would touch the world's heart and roll away the world's burden. And the work which He began, He should continue. His influence was pictured as going on broadening and deepening through all after time: "His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call him blessed" (Ps. lxxii. 17).

* Lyall; *Propedeia Prophetica,* p. 124.

Now, it will be admitted that the hope was, in this aspect of it, quite as marvellous as in the other of which we have already spoken. The Jews were not ignorant of the limitations of human greatness. They had had great men who had left their impress upon the institutions and the life of their country; but none of them had ever done, or had ever dreamed of attempting, such a work as this. Their plans, like their activity, had been directed to the needs of their own people. Who among them had ever borne upon his heart the world's burden, and dreamed of meeting the world's need? Who had ever imagined that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed? Then their work had been limited by time as well as by ability. How often had Israel reason to ask: "the fathers—where are they? and the prophets—do they live for ever?" The mightiest had had to succumb to death, and his place was taken and his work was carried on by some other servant whom God also honoured and upheld. The ages had never before been chained to any one man. Whence then can the hope have sprung that one should be born who would be the source of an undying influence, who would dominate, and guide, and bless, men not only of His own generation but of all after time? And this is not the only marvel. The hope was as sure as it was strange. The Old Testament Scriptures looked forward with confident and glowing anticipation to the coming of One who should change the current of the world's thought. And we have to testify that One man has appeared—the one Man of all time—by whom this has been, and is now being, done. The name of Jesus still lives upon our lips—His power rests upon our hearts. Call it fanaticism if you will; say, if you choose, that this faith in a living Christ, which has endured for eighteen centuries and is spreading among the tribes of the earth to-day, is a hallucination. Let such explanations be received with what favour they may, these theories

themselves testify that this faith exists and that it is a power. That is to say, one man has arisen, whose surpassing excellence they admit, and through faith in whom the work, which is bringing nations to God, has been carried on through age after age and is being carried on now. His name has been "continued;" men are "blessed in Him;" and many nations "call Him blessed." Shall we say that it is a mere coincidence that this strange hope has been, and is still being, answered by this strange fact in the world's story?

The predictions regarding the Messiah would have been wonderful had they never advanced beyond these points. But, on the other hand, if the fulness of knowledge which the Old Testament claimed was a reality, there was no reason why its revelation of the future should not be still more explicit. There was reason rather that miracles of prophecy should be gathered around this central hope of Scripture more fully than elsewhere. And this expectation has been fully realized. The nature of the Redeemer's work, and even His character and history, are so minutely described that it is possible to compile a history of Christ and Christianity merely from the prophecies. For one thing the Saviour, for whom the world waited,

WAS TO BE A JEW.

It was recorded that it was said to Abraham, "in *thy* seed" shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. There are other predictions which named the tribe, and even the family, from which he was to spring, and the very town in which he should be born. I mention these latter predictions merely to remind the reader how definite and clear the prediction was that the Saviour of the world was to be a Jew. He was to be born in a Jewish town, and to be a descendant of the noblest family in the leading tribe of Israel. Had there been no real foresight in these predictions, every step

taken in the direction of increased definiteness multiplied the chances of exposure. It was going far to say that a time was coming when the nations would cast away their idols. It was going further to affirm that this revolution should be the work of one man. But to define the hope still more, and to say that he should spring from this race and no other, was to court defeat a thousandfold. What, then, is the result? The answer can be given in one word. There has been no defeat. The blessing for which the world waited—the blessing of light, and peace, and strength to seek a better way—has come through one man, and that man was a Jew.

We have to mark, however, still greater things than these. The readers of the Old Testament were not merely told that Christ should come: they were also told when He should appear.

THE VERY YEAR

when He should be manifested to Israel, and should enter upon His work, was fixed centuries before. We have already, in the previous chapter, proved the wonderful character of the book of Daniel. That book has also another claim upon our attention, for it contains one of the most marvellous predictions regarding the Messiah. In the ninth chapter it is recorded that the prophet was told that "seventy weeks (literally "seventy sevens") are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy" (Dan. ix. 24). This prolonged description is enough to assure us that the finger is here laid upon the advent and the work of Christ. It was His alone "to finish transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity." We are not, however,

abandoned to the guidance of inference. Christ is distinctly named. The prophet was bid to mark that, "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah (the Anointed One), the Prince, shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks" (ver. 25)—that is in all 69 weeks, or, more literally, 69 sevens.

To what point in the history of Jesus do these 69 sevens take us? That is a most important question, and it has a distinct answer in the prediction. We are told (verse 20) that after the second period, the "three score and two weeks," "shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." The sevens and the 62 sevens take us, therefore, to the Messiah's death.

As to what these "sevens" are, there can be no difficulty. The same phrase occurs in Leviticus xxv. 8, where "seven sabbaths (or sevens) of years" are spoken of as the period which is to elapse between each Jubilee. The Jews indeed were commanded to reckon time in this way. Every seventh year the land was to enjoy its sabbath and to remain untilled. When seven sevens were completed, the Jubilee was proclaimed, and every Jewish slave was freed, and every poor man's land which had been sold was restored to him or to his children. These had been to the Jews, largely mere ideal institutions. The laws stood upon the statute book, but they were not observed. By reckoning in this way, the years which stood between Israel and their hope, it may have been indicated that these observances were still demanded by God and that the hope was for those who feared and obeyed. At all events, the numbers are numbers of years. It seems to have been an occasional, if not a customary, mode of reckoning time. In Genesis xxix. 27, 28, we read that Laban said to Jacob: "Fulfil her week (her seven) and we will give thee this also for the service thou wilt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week (her seven)."

The 70 sevens are, then, 490 years, and the 69 sevens are 483 years.

But from what point was the reckoning to begin? For this the prophet is referred to an event which, when the words were spoken, was still future. It was the going forth of a commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, which at that time was deserted and in ashes. On referring to the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which give us the history of the period immediately following the captivity, we find that four decrees are recorded. The first, however, only grants permission to the Jews to return and to build the Temple (Ezra i. 1, 4). There is nothing said about the restoring and rebuilding of *the city*. The second decree is a mere reiteration of the first. It provides for the rebuilding of the Temple and for the supply of what is needful for the Temple service (Ezra vi. 1, 12).

Under that edict of Darius Hystaspis, the building of the temple was completed, the priests were arranged in divisions, and the ancient temple service was again begun (verses 13-22). The third decree was issued more than half a century afterwards when Ezra and his companions went up from Babylon to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. "Now this is a copy of the letter that the King Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the scribe. . . I make a decree that all they, of the people of Israel and of the priests and Levites in my realm, who are minded of their own free-will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king and of his seven counsellors to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand; and to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem, and all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the free-will offering of the

people and the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem" (vii. 11-16). The edict goes on to confer power upon Ezra, to dispose of the funds committed to his care for the temple service, and to call upon the local governors for additional help, etc. It concludes with these words: "And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, who may judge all the people that are beyond the river, and all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment" (25-26).

That third edict has very generally been regarded as the decree "to restore and to build Jerusalem"—a view in which I formerly concurred. But a closer examination of the terms of the edict does not support that conclusion. Those terms are most explicit. Ezra is empowered to convey the treasure contributed by the king and his counsellors, from Babylon to Jerusalem, to receive other voluntary offerings, to expend the funds, to call upon the "treasurers beyond the river" for additional funds, and to appoint magistrates and judges. But there is no mention whatever of building and restoring Jerusalem; and, if that task had been assigned to Ezra, it would be hard indeed to explain why, in an edict fully transcribed and elaborately minute in regard to everything else, no reference whatever is made to that important undertaking.

When we turn to the fourth decree, however, we meet for the first time, language which is in significant accord with the description of "the commandment" spoken of by Daniel. Nehemiah tells us that, when Artaxerxes asked "For what dost thou make request," he replied: "If it please the king, and if thy servant hath found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldst send

me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it" (ii. 5). He also begged a letter to "Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me" (8). Here we have in explicit terms an authorisation to Ezra to build the city of his fathers' sepulchres; and the fourth decree is consequently "the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem."

To apply these results, we have first of all to inquire what those 483 years are. Are they years in every respect like the years of our own calendar? There are clear indications in Scripture that the Hebrew month, like that of Babylonia and of Egypt, consisted of 30 days. The year consequently contained 360 days; multiplying those 483 years of the prophecy by 360 so as to find the entire number of days, we divide by 365¼ and so change them into calendar years. The result of this rough and ready, but sufficiently accurate, method is that the 483 prophetic years are found to be equivalent to 476 years of our ordinary chronology.

We have to ask next to what special point in the past we have to attach this immense measuring line, so that we may stretch it onward into the future. The narrative in Nehemiah furnishes a perfectly clear reply. We are told that the concession was made "in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the King" (ii. 1). He began to reign in the year 465 B. C. He was now in the twentieth year of his reign: in other words 19 years of his reign were completed and the 20th year was in progress. Deducting these 19 years from 465, we are brought to 446 B. C.—the year in which the edict was issued "to restore and to build Jerusalem."

A word or two will now complete our demon-

stration. Applying the 476 years of the prediction to this point (446 years before the birth of our Lord) we find that they bring us down to that event and leave 30 years over. That is, the year 30 A. D. is specified as that of the Saviour's cutting off in His crucifixion. While everyone will feel how amazing it is that the year and the very month—the month Nisan—of our Lord's death should have been fixed centuries beforehand, some may imagine that there is, nevertheless, a slight inaccuracy. We are told (Luke iii. 23) that Jesus entered upon this ministry when he was about 30 years of age. The year 30 A. D. would, therefore, be the year when His ministry began, and not the year of His crucifixion. But the Scripture is absolutely accurate. When the division between time B. C. and time A. D. was made in the 6th century of our era, *a mistake of four years was made,* the year 1 A. D. was really the year 5 A. D.; and the year 10 the year 14 A. D.; and the year 30 the year 34 A. D. Our Lord's ministry extended about four years; and thus the year 30 A. D. in our chronology was really the year of our Lord's death. The chronology was in error, but there was no error in the Scripture; and that sacrifice, which will be remembered and celebrated throughout eternity, was offered at the appointed time.

Comment on these facts is needless. They tell their own tale and leave their own impress. I pass on to note how fully

THE HISTORY OF JESUS

was revealed in the mirror of prophecy. There are some predictions, such as those regarding the family from which He was to spring and the place where He was to be born, the accomplishment of which, however undeniable it might be to the men of the time, would now be hard to prove. These I

pass over. But it was predicted that His condition should be one of

LOWLINESS AND POVERTY.

Though born of the royal house, that house was ere then to be shorn of its splendour. The tree was to be cut down to the level of the grass, which once grew under its shade. "There shall come forth a root *out of the stock* of Jesse, and *a branch out of his roots* shall bear fruit" (Isaiah xi. 1). His condition was to be one which men would regard with great contempt: the Scripture pointed "to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth, a servant of rulers" (Isaiah xlix. 7). There was to be nothing of superior station or worldly wealth to commend Him to Israel. He was to be as "a root out of a dry ground, He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isaiah liii. 2). How completely this was fulfilled we know. He was a carpenter's son. He himself was called "the carpenter." He had no "advantages." His knowledge seemed inexplicable to the men of His time. "How knoweth this man letters," they asked, "having never learned?" He could offer no worldly inducement to his followers. "The foxes have holes," He said to one, "and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." So low had the fortunes of the ancient royal house sunk that, in the times immediately preceding, they had not furnished a single claimant for the throne, and when Vespasian afterwards made diligent search for the descendants of the hero-king, that he might crush every possible seed of rebellion, they were found to be so poor and abject that they were dismissed with contempt.

Then He was to be

REJECTED BY ISRAEL.

The coming of the Messiah had been the hope of Israel for well-nigh two thousand years. His advent was longed for, and prayed for daily, through all their generations. Had this hope been the offspring of enthusiasm, nourished by national vanity, it would be difficult to explain how, along with this anticipation, there should be the most distinct predictions that He would be rejected and abhorred by the very people who so intensely desired His appearing. And yet this is what we do find. The prophet, looking forward to the day of the Messiah, exclaims: "When we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isaiah liii. 3). I have already quoted the words which speak of Him as one "whom man despiseth. . . whom the nation abhorreth" (Isaiah xlix. 7). Those who doubt the full inspiration of Scripture have yet to give some rational explanation of this fact among others, how such a forecast as this came to find a place in the portraiture of the Messiah, and how it has happened that it has also been literally fulfilled. Not only was He rejected by the Jews of His own time: the rejection has been perpetuated to the present hour. No prediction could have seemed more improbable, and yet none ever received a sadder and more complete fulfilment.

The Messiah was also

TO SUFFER A VIOLENT DEATH.

He was to be "cut off" (Daniel ix. 26). "He was taken away. . . He was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. liii. 8). He was to die under a

JUDICIAL SENTENCE.

"By oppression and judgment He was **taken away**" (Isa. liii. 8). Even

THE MANNER AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES

of His death were foretold. "I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou has brought Me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of evil-doers have enclosed Me; they *pierced My hands and My feet*" (Ps. xxii. 14, 16). "I gave My back to the smiters and My cheeks to them who plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah l. 6). "All they that see Me, laugh Me to scorn. They shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying: He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him seeing He delighteth in Him. . . . They part My garments among them, and upon My vesture do they cast lots" (Ps. xxii. 7, 8, 18). We do not read these words for the first time. We may have often thought of them as a marvellous description of the sufferings of Jesus; but have we ever pondered the fact that they are prophecy, and that they were written centuries before that life was lived? What does it mean? Is it not God's summons to believe and accept His salvation?

The predictions also supply a full description of

THE CHARACTER OF JESUS.

They speak of His ardent devotion, His complete surrender to God. "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Ps. xi. 8). They explain the fulness of wisdom and spiritual might which marked Him: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah xi. 2). They speak of the patience of Jesus. There was to be no rude haste to snatch an early

victory. He was to be no leader in tumultuous assault even upon wrong. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street" (Isaiah xlii. 2). They tell of the lowliness of Jesus. The greatness of Christ was not to remove Him from us and shut Him up in a world of His own. There was to be might without its pride, wisdom without its haughty disdain, holiness without its blighting scorn of weakness and sin. "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench" (Isaiah xliii. 3). "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs in His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that give suck" (Isaiah xl. 11). Can we see the Redeemer more clearly in the Gospels themselves than He is revealed here? And if not, is not this fact alone enough to prove that He is God's gift to us? That life no man could have looked for, far less painted. It was an absolutely new experience for humanity. Its appearance caused a new departure in thought and morals. It revolutionised human ideas of greatness and excellence. And yet that life and spirit are not only indicated—they are gloriously displayed in what are held forth as announcements of One who is yet to come, and to bring back the earth to God. We are told, centuries before He appears, that this is to be His character. It was much to have heard of old the voice from heaven, and to have felt one's spirit thrill in answer to the cry "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." But this is a fuller and surer testimony. One might have been mistaken as to whence, or from whom, the cry came. The thought might have fallen like a blight that the whole experience was a dream. But this is no dream, and here there is no possibility of mistake. When no other could, God showed us His Son, so to speak, that we might know Him when He came. And now that He has appeared, who can forbear

exclaiming "this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world!"

The reader need hardly be reminded how fully

THE WORK OF JESUS

is described in prophecy. He was to give light; He Himself was to be light. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isa. ix. 2). He was to be given "for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isa. xlii. 6, 7). "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. xlix. 6). He was to touch the whole earth and bless it with peace and power. "Like as many were astonished at thee . . . so shall he sprinkle many nations" (Isaiah lii. 14, 15). "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till He had set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law" (Isa. xlii. 4).

But this fulness of power and blessing was to be reached through suffering. We have seen that the Messiah was to die. That death had an explanation. It was written "thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin" (Isaiah liii. 10); and again, "Although He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He hath put Him to grief" (vv. 9, 10). What all this meant for us the prophet has explained in the verse immediately preceding. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we

have turned every one to his own way, AND THE LORD HATH LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL" (vv. 4, 6). The work of Christ is described in similar terms in Dan. ix. 24. It was "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." There is also a striking prediction to the same effect in Zechariah ix. 11. God is speaking concerning His Messiah who "shall speak peace unto the nations," and whose "dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," and He continues: "As for Thee also, BECAUSE OF THE BLOOD OF THY COVENANT I have sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." They are shut in with death; but they are His, and they are released on one ground alone—"the *blood* of Thy covenant." Great difficulties have been felt by many in regard to the doctrine of substitution. It has been arraigned as the fruit of superstition, or of terrible misconception. The whole body of ordinary teaching on the subject has been named "the blood theology," and been cast on one side as if that description were sufficient condemnation. It will be admitted that there may be aspects from which the question might be so viewed as greatly to alter our judgment of it. Far as our philosophy has reached, it is still true that there are things in heaven and earth not dreamed of in it. But we have to deal here with God's thought, not man's. The words are stamped as His, for they display clear and full knowledge of what no man, when the words were spoken, could foresee even dimly. They are, therefore, God's statement of what the death of Christ means, and not man's explanation of it. The prediction is an attestation, not to the Lord's mission only, but also to the doctrine of "forgiveness through His blood." It is the seal of God's covenant with us in Christ. It is the Divine assurance that the wondrous tale of the cross is true. "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every

one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

I may notice in conclusion, a prophetic testimony of equally vital import, namely, that

JESUS LIVES AND SAVES.

We find in the predictions a strange conjunction of death and after-service—service which, notwithstanding death, is to be rendered in the midst of men, and by Him who died for them. In the 22nd Psalm, He, whose hands and feet were "pierced," whose garments were divided, and upon whose raiment they cast lots, looks forward to work which He will nevertheless do for God on the earth. "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee" (Ps. xxii. 22). In that prophetic hymn of the humiliation and death of Christ, which we have already referred to—the 53rd of Isaiah—this strange testimony is still clearer. After saying how it pleased the Lord to bruise Him and put Him to grief, the prophet proceeds: "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. By His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil wth the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. Yet He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. liii. 10-12).

Other predictions are equally emphatic as to the unceasing activity and undying influence of the Redeemer. But here the fulness of His triumph over death and the oblivion, which at the close of life's brief day, falls in deepening darkness upon human

work and fame, are put so clearly that we need no testimony besides. Death does not shut out from *His* view the scene of His earthly labours. "He shall see His seed," "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Death does not even end His earthly activity. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in *His* hand." *He* shall "justify many." "*He* shall divide the spoil with the strong." Next in point of difficulty to the doctrine of the Atonement stands this, that Jesus is a present Saviour—that to-day, as of old, He hears the cry of need, and will accept, and bless, and save. But here again difficulty is met by the Divine assurance. These words are God's, for no other could have told of Christ's advent, or pictured His character, or told the story of His suffering and work. If any other could, then put the words aside; pay no heed to this wondrous testimony about a living, present Christ, for the words may in that case be merely man's. But, if they bear the stamp of a knowledge that is infinite, we know that they came from One who will not deceive, and who cannot err. To men of old the predictions spoke of one who said "I come." To us now they tell of one whose word is: "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me."

CHAPTER X.

PREDICTIONS FULFILLED IN THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS.

We shall now close our readings, in the fulfilled prophecies of Scripture, with a rapid survey of those which bear upon the fortunes of the Jews. We have seen something of the testimony which God has borne to His word, to Christ, and to some of the leading doctrines of that faith, which we are told forms the pathway to eternal life. It may be well, then, that we should be reminded that where God sheds light He expects obedience, and that the possession of privileges has its duties and its penalties.

In another respect it may be well that this should form the terminus of our inquiries. We have hitherto been dealing with regions and events far from us, and the force which closer acquaintance and fuller knowledge would have given to conviction has been wanting. But the Jews, scattered everywhere and dwelling in our own midst, bring the claims home to us both of the Old Testament and of the New. The Bible lives in the Jew. His whole history is a testimony to its historic truth: in his present customs, in his very separateness, we see the impress of events, the reality of which many have doubted, and some have denied; and he teaches us that God's hand rests on the life of to-day as truly as it rested on the life of the past.

Perhaps the most startling fact in connection with the Jewish race is its attitude towards Christianity. We know that the Gospel was preached to the Jew before it was declared to the Gentile, and that many received the message. The foundations of the new faith were laid among the followers of the old. All the apostles, without a single exception, were Jews. The first preachers of the Gospel, who went everywhere preaching the word, were also of the same race; and multitudes of their countrymen, both at home and abroad, rejoiced in the assurance of forgiveness through the blood of Christ. But, when all this has been admitted, the fact remains that, by nearly the whole race then, and by the entire race ever since, the Messiah has been rejected and scorned. This unanimous and persistent repudiation of the claims of Jesus by His own people is not devoid of difficulty, and the difficulty is increased when we remember that for long ages this nation had been trained to know God's mind, and had been prepared by prophecy and by the institutions of the law to receive Christ when He came.

If we were asked, then, to explain the rejection of Jesus by His own people, we might not be able to wholly remove the impression that it throws doubt upon the claims of the Gospel. But the prophecies, which the Jews cherish as well as we, turn this, which might have been used as an argument against Christianity, into one of the strongest testimonies to its truth.

THE REJECTION WAS FORETOLD.

We are familiar, for example, with the words of Isaiah. The prophet exclaims, as he looks onward to the Gospel day and searches for the fruits among his people of the labours of those who, with himself, have been proclaiming Jesus: "Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (liii. 1.) He breaks out into lamen-

tation over Israel's rejection of Him of whom he has just predicted that He shall "sprinkle many nations" (lii. 15), and exclaims: "When we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (liii. 2, 3). The Jews regarded the crucifixion of Jesus as disproving all His claims, and yet, seven centuries before His blood stained the sod of Calvary, it was declared they should so regard it: "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (liii. 4).

Similar announcements meet us elsewhere. That which is yet to be "the headstone of the corner" is "the stone which the builders refused" (Ps. cxviii. 22). Blindness was to fall upon Israel: "Tarry ye and wonder; take your pleasure and be blind: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your heads, the seers hath He covered. And all vision is become to you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed; and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned" (Isa. xxix. 9-1). Therefore the Redeemer exclaims: "I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought and vanity;" and while He is described as "a light to the Gentiles," He is in the same breath spoken of as "one whom man despiseth—whom the nation abhorreth" (Isa. xlix. 4, 6, 7). This is, in fact, one of the great outstanding features in the prophetic portraiture of the Messiah. If, therefore, Israel had accepted, and not rejected, Jesus, that would have been one of

the strongest possible arguments against Christianity. It would have proved that *He* was not the Messiah whose advent had been foretold. On the other hand, in these predictions and their accomplishment we have another seal to the Gospel. The rejection is one more test, placed in our hands by God Himself, whereby we might know whether He whose name should be declared to us was indeed the Saviour of the world; and Israel's abhorrence of the Nazarene is their unconscious testimony that this indeed is He.

Another difficulty in Israel's rejection of the Messiah is its long continuance. One generation may err, but succeeding generations review the decisions of the past and judge righteous judgment. There was much in the case of the Jews to suggest and to guide such a review. The terrible discipline, through which they have passed, might have humbled and enlightened them. It might have been thought also that it was impossible for them to dwell for 18 centuries in the midst of Christian nations, with the name of Jesus for ever in their ears, with the gospels spread before them, and the testimony of their own prophets continually under their eyes, without acknowledging the mistake or rebellion of their fathers. And yet, in spite of all, their rejection of Jesus has been perpetuated, and is as resolute to-day as it ever has been. This, we repeat, is a farther difficulty, and one which, taken by itself, might form a stumbling-block in the pathway of belief. It might be hard, perhaps impossible, for us to explain how the testimony of those prophecies, which the Jews revere as the Word of God, has failed to convince them that Jesus is the Messiah. But here again the objection is really one of the strongest confirmations. This, too, was predicted.

THE LONG-CONTINUED REJECTION

of Christianity by the Jews is distinctly prophesied

in the Old Testament and the New. Isaiah at the outset of his ministry has a vision of the Lord, who has come to His Temple, and whose glory fills it. But, while he is sent to Israel with God's word, he is told that the vision which *he* has seen will not be given to them. "And he said, go and tell this people: Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again and be healed." The prophet asks how long the doom of blindness is to rest upon Israel, and receives the reply: "Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and the Lord have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land" (Isaiah vi. 9-12).

It is clear, therefore, that the blindness of the Jews was to be long continued, was to be continued, indeed, during the long ages in which the land of Israel was to be depopulated, so wasted that its very fruitfulness was to pass away. The prediction in the New Testament is still more definite. In the Epistle to the Romans the apostle Paul speaks of his "heart's desire and supplication to God" that Israel may be saved. But he holds out no hope to his readers of an immediate answer to his prayer. Israel will not return *till the time of God's forbearance with the Gentiles has expired.* "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, UNTIL THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES BE COME IN" (Romans xi. 25), that is, till the time come when God shall judge them as He has judged His ancient people. Others understand the words as referring to mercy, not to judgment, and believe that they in-

dicate the ingathering of all the Gentile nations into the kingdom of God. In either case it is clear that the rejection of Jesus by Israel *was to continue to the present time and beyond it.* This difficulty, therefore, like the other, is another testimony to the truth of God's word and to the Gospel which He has declared. The Jew confirms by his very rejection the claims which he scorns.

This, however, is only the beginning of the story. The sin was to be visited with judgment. Daniel in connection with his prediction regarding the Messiah, which we have already considered, announces the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple: "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Dan. ix. 26). Zechariah, writing after the return from Babylon, speaks of another terrible calamity for his people. The land is to be spoiled, Israel is to be given over to slaughter, and to be sold into slavery, "For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord" (Zech. xi. 1-6). Malachi, the last of the prophets, also hints at a rejection of Israel contemporaneous with the calling of the Gentiles. "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My name is great among the Gentiles" (Malachi i. 10, 11).

We shall mainly confine ourselves, however, to the more ancient prophecies in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, to which we have referred in an earlier chapter. There, on the foundation of their institutions as a nation, it was written, not only that God would punish persistent rebellion, but also how He would punish it. The picture of the Divine judgment is full of minute details: it is painted in vivid colours. There may be some doubt, it is true, as to the application of these predictions to

the rejection of the Messiah. But this doubt, if it exists, will be dissipated by a moment's reflection. No other sin that Israel ever committed could equal their rejection of Him, to serve and aid whom in His mission to the nations they existed as a people. For them to reject God's covenant for themselves, to attempt to bring to nought God's plan for the world's redemption, and to fight, as they did for ages, against God's effort to bring the nations to Himself, was the most daring rebellion in which Israel had ever engaged. If Christianity is of God, and these are God's words, they must find their full accomplishment in the history of Israel at and since the beginning of the Christian era. If they had not been so fulfilled, there could have been no more certain proof either that the words were not of God, or that Christianity was not from Him, and that in rejecting and attempting to defeat it, the Jews were not rejecting and seeking the overthrow of anything which could be called the counsel of God.

Turning now to the prediction in Deuteronomy, we note that those who were to be

THE INSTRUMENTS IN PUNISHING ISRAEL

are described. If the words had been meant merely as a threat, and not as an unveiling of the future, the materials for impressive writing lay at hand. What could have impressed Israel more than to hold over them the menace of a return to the fiery furnace of Egyptian bondage? Or some of the neighbouring and dreaded nations of the time might have been named as their conquerors and oppressors. But to none of these did the warning point. The chastisement was not to be the consequence of ordinary aggression. It was to bear upon it from first to last the stamp of Divine judgment. "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth; a

nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand: a nation of fierce countenance" (Deuteronomy xxviii: 49, 50). It is hardly necessary to remind the reader how wonderfully these words were fulfilled in the case of the Romans. They came from far, from the ends of the earth. Theirs was a speech the Jews did not understand. They were men of fierce aspect. Let me, however, again remind him that this prediction could scarcely have resulted from a calculation of probabilities. We may be occasionally disturbed by a dread of national chastisement, but, if we were to don the prophet's mantle and speak of coming invasion, should we not inevitably think of nations known to us as the probable instruments of vengeance? If the writer of Deuteronomy had been moved by the thoughts of his own heart, this course would have been as natural to him as it is to us. But he turned away from every people then known to Israel, and said "Your punishment will come from none of these. A people from far, from the ends of the earth, a people whose speech you will not understand—they will be the sword in the hand of God." What shall we say of it? If the words are not God's, then their presence on the page of Scripture must be due to one of the most wonderful freaks of chance of which we have any record.

Whether they are due to chance or not, will be made abundantly clear ere we have finished. The words proceed to speak of

THE MERCILESSNESS OF THESE MINISTERS OF VENGEANCE.

They were to be "a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young" (Deut. xxviii. 50). We have often heard of the stern necessities of war, but these necessities were never more ruthlessly enforced than by the Romans. In their stern disci-

pline there was no room for pity. There was no soft spot in that iron heart, to which either age or infancy could make its appeal. Those who could be sold as slaves, who could fight in the cruel sports of their amphitheatres, or adorn the triumph of their general, might be spared, but they never troubled themselves with useless incumbrances. Josephus tells how at Tiberias, even where the people had been promised their lives, the old men and those who "were useless" were put to the sword. The same course was followed at Jerusalem and elsewhere. They regarded not the person of the old, nor did they shew favour to the young.

Another feature in the punishment of Israel was, that, though Egypt was not to be the means of their overthrow, it was nevertheless to be concerned in their degradation. They were to be

TAKEN BACK TO EGYPT IN SHIPS.

"And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships" (ver. 68). Of those saved at Jerusalem, all who were over 17 years of age were sent to labour in the Egyptian mines, where the prisoners were kept at work day and night without intermission, or the slightest interval of sleep, till they fell down and died. "The vast numbers," says Diodorus, "employed in these mines are bound in fetters and compelled to work day and night without intermission and without the least hope of escape. No attention is paid to their persons; they have not even a piece of rag to cover themselves; and so wretched is their condition that every one who witnesses it deplores the excessive misery they endure. No rest, no intermission from toil, are given either to the sick or maimed; neither the weakness of age nor woman's infirmities are regarded; all are driven to their work with the lash, till, at last, overcome with the intolerable weight of their afflictions,

they die in the midst of their toil."* It was a more terrible bondage than that from which God had freed their fathers. Besides these, vast multitudes were sold into slavery. The markets were glutted, and the words were accomplished: "No man shall buy you" (ver. 68). 97,000, according to Josephus, were carried away captive from Jerusalem alone. This number was increased by a large part of the population of Judea and Galilee. Wherever resistance had been offered to the Roman arms, captivity was the mildest fate granted to the vanquished. On the suppression of the rising under Barcochebas in the next century all the horrors of the previous war were repeated. "They were reduced to slavery," says Milman, "by thousands. There was a great fair held under a celebrated Terebinth, which tradition had consecrated as the very tree under which Abraham had pitched his tent. Thither his miserable children were brought in droves, and sold as cheap as horses. Others were carried away and sold at Gaza; *others were transported to Egypt.*"†

This forms only a small part, however, of the prophetic description of those sufferings and calamities, which were to make that terrible time to be forever remembered as a time of judgment. One characteristic of the war was to be

ITS SIEGES.

"He shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This was by no means an ordinary incident in Jewish warfare. The wars conducted by the Maccabees were wars of battles. They met their enemies in the field. The

* Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians,* ii., pp. 143-144.
† Milman, *History of the Jews,* ii., p. 436.

Jews pursued Cestius when he retreated from Jerusalem, and they made a disastrous attack on Ascalon, but with these exceptions the war was, as here described, a war of sieges. In previous struggles there had been battles, the names of which awoke memories of joy or sorrow in the breasts of the children of Israel, but now their story is the story of towns besieged and stormed. The names Jotapata, Japha, Tarichea, Gamala, Itabyrium, Gischala, Jerusalem, Herodion, Machaerus, Massada, which appear in the history of the campaigns, are the names, not of stricken fields, but of captured cities and fortresses. I repeat that this was not a necessary feature of the war. The armies of Israel might have been defeated on their plains or on their mountains, and the cities might, as a consequence of the defeat, have surrendered. But the contest is pictured as one of infatuation or despair. It is war to the death. The battle raged wherever there was a chance of resistance, and the Romans had to fight their way through the land step by step, reducing one stronghold after another. Even after Jerusalem had fallen, as fierce a stand was made at Machaerus and Massada. "He shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

We may notice also what is said of

THE METHOD OF ATTACK.

"He shall besiege thee in all thy gates, *until thy high and fenced walls come down,* wherein thou trustedst." Josephus describes the terrors of the Roman battering-ram. When it is "pulled backward," he says, "by a great number of men with united forces, and then thrust forward by the same men with a mighty noise, it batters the walls with that iron part which is prominent: nor is there any tower so strong, nor walls so broad, that can resist any more than its

first batteries, but all are forced to yield to it at last." He describes its effects at Jotapata, where he commanded: "Now at the very first stroke of this engine the wall was shaken, and a terrible clamour was raised by the people within the city, as if they were already taken." The result here, as everywhere besides, was that not only was a breach made and the city taken, but, in accordance with the orders of Vespasian, the city was "entirely demolished and all the fortifications burned down." Their high and fenced walls came down wherein they trusted.

Then the prophecy presents a vivid picture of the sufferings of the people. They were to endure

THE EXTREMITIES OF FAMINE.

It was to be no ordinary tale of want and suffering, but one such that the ears of everyone that heard it should tingle. "Thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall straiten thee. The man that is tender among you and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he hath remaining: so that he will not give to any of them the flesh of his children whom he shall eat. . . The tender and delicate woman among you which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, . . she shall eat them (her children) for want of all things secretly" (Deut. xxviii. 53-57). So closely was this terrible prediction fulfilled that history in this case seems but the echo of prophecy. "The famine was too hard," says Josephus, "for all other passions, . . . insomuch that children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their very mouths, and, what was still more to

be pitied, so did the mothers do to their infants; and, when those that were most dear were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives." And he tells, with evident reluctance (for he was still a Jew, and knew he was exposing the shame of his country to the eyes of Gentile readers), of a certain woman named Mary, "eminent for her family and her wealth" who by reason of the want of all things "in the siege and in the straitness," "slew her son; and they roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed."

They were also to be

"LEFT FEW IN NUMBER"

(Deut. xxviii. 62). Summing up the numbers given by Josephus, it appears that 1,356,460 were slain and 101,700 carried away captive. But he only gives the number of prisoners in Jerusalem and two other places, and there were many losses which he omits, "besides the immense waste of life from massacre, famine, and disease, inseparable from such a war in almost every district."* This terrible total was swelled through insurrection and massacre in other parts of the Roman Empire, and was further increased by the atrocities perpetrated by the Romans in suppressing the outbreak under Barochebas. Of that "massacre the Rabbins tell frightful stories, but their horror is mitigated by their extravagance. More are said to have fallen at Bither than escaped with Moses from Egypt. The horses waded up to their bits in carnage. Blood flowed so copiously, that the stream carried stones weighing four pounds into the sea, according to their account, forty miles distant. The dead covered eighteen square miles, and the inhabitants of the adjacent regions had no need to manure their ground for seven years. A

* *History of the Jews,* ii., p. 381.

more trustworthy authority, Dion Cassius, states that during the whole war the enormous number of 580,000 fell by the sword, not including those who perished by famine, disease, and fire. The whole of Judea was a desert; wolves and hyænas went howling along the streets of the desolate cities."*

But the predictions are not bounded by the judgments which marked the end of the Jewish nation in Palestine. They have also told their after story. We noticed in a former chapter the prophecy, that they should be swept from off the land which God had given them: "Ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest in to possess it" (Deut. xxviii. 63). It may be enough to remark now that, from the time of the Emperor Hadrian to the present, they have never been permitted to call that land their own. Men of every nationality and faith have been more at home in the ancient land of Israel than the despised and downtrodden Jew.

We proceed to follow their after history as it is depicted in prophecy, and we mark first of all

THEIR UNIVERSAL DISPERSION.

"And the Lord shall scatter thee among all peoples from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth" (Deut. xxviii. 64); "And you will I scatter among the nations" (Leviticus xxvi. 33). These words have been so fully accomplished that the dispersion of the Jews has long been one of the commonplaces of history. The Jew is found in every land, from north to south, from east to west. Even to-day, accustomed as we are to the commingling of nationalities, the dispersion of Israel strikes us with astonishment. To no other nation would these words have applied. Can we explain how they have been so abundantly fulfilled in the fate of the one people of whom

* *Ibid.*, ii., pp. 435-436.

they were spoken? The fulfilments of other predictions have been far removed from the scope of our observation, and have not summoned us, so to speak, as God's witnesses. But this touches us. It is a fulfilment in our own day, and in our own land. It is one which we have no need to search out and make ourselves acquainted with. It has been laid fully before us; it is among the thing we have long known. And now what is the testimony we have to offer? Is it not that the book which declared this from of old bears upon it here the Divine seal?

This, however, is only part of the picture. It was foretold that, though dispersed,

THEY SHOULD BE PRESERVED.

That a nation, deprived of its fatherland, wandering over all the earth without any home or rallying-place, deprived, too, as we shall immediately see, of the chief ceremonies and institutions of the religion which had been the main instrument in binding them together as a people—that a nation so placed should not be absorbed by the peoples among whom they sojourned, and should not disappear as a distinct and separate race, is contrary to reason and experience. In every other instance the uprooting of a people from their own land and the scattering of them among surrounding nations, have been followed by their extinction as a race. But the words which pronounced the judgment upon the Jew, said also, "And yet, for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God" (Lev. xxvi. 44). And here again the improbable, and therefore the utterly unforeseen, has happened. The Jews plucked up out of their own land, and scattered over the whole earth, have nevertheless been preserved. "Massacred by thousands, yet springing up again from their undying stock, the

Jews appear at all times and in all regions. Their perpetuity, their national immortality, is at once the most curious problem to the political inquirer; to the religious man a subject of profound and awful admiration."*

The

SEPARATENESS,

which is such a marked characteristic of the Jewish people, was also clearly predicted. It has not always been the desire of Jews that it should continue. There were many in the time of Ezekiel, as well as afterwards in the days of the Maccabees, who considered its perpetuation to be a mistake. God's answer to the imagination of their hearts was this: "That which cometh into your mind shall not be at all; in that ye say, we will be as the nations, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone" (Ezek. xx. 32). Another prediction, to which we shall again refer, represents Israel after the dispersion as a woman who had been an adulteress, but whom the prophet purchases and weds on the condition that she will no more transgress, but abide for him many days (Hosea iii. 1-3). Neither their own proclivities to idolatry, nor the terrible constraint which was to be put upon them, would avail to blot out the distinctions which separated them from the nations among whom they sojourned. These predictions have been answered by what is one of the mightiest marvels of history. Rivers sometimes enter the sea in such volume and force that they cleave pathways for miles through the ocean bed. But this force is soon spent, and their waters, like those of meaner streams, have at last to commingle with the ocean. We can understand how the Jews might retain their national, or what in their case was the same, their religious, characteristics for a time. Customs, insti-

* *History of the Jews*, ii., pp. 398-399.

tutions, and beliefs, which had been established for ages, could not be forgotten in a day. But scattered, dispirited, in many cases enslaved, surrounded by strong temptations, and goaded by bitter and unrelenting persecution to cast away the faith of their fathers, they have overcome every opposing influence and disappointed every expectation. It is difficult to explain this result, and it was impossible to foresee it. What then of the words which proclaimed it from of old, which said that Israel should thus remain many days, and that, in spite of attempts even from within to heathenize the nation, it should not be "as the nations, as the families of the countries?"

And the story is told yet more fully. The word, which spoke God's judgment upon their sin, foretold THEIR TREATMENT IN THE LANDS OF THEIR LONG SOJOURN. They were, for example, to be

COMPELLED TO POLLUTE THEMSELVES WITH IDOLATRY.

"The Lord shall scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, even wood and stone" (Deut. xxviii. 64). This doom had been laid upon them in the prediction which spoke of the earlier captivity: "The Lord shall bring thee and thy king which thou shalt set over thee unto a nation which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone" (ver. 36). That prophecy was literally fulfilled when both king and people were removed to Babylon. But it will be noticed that while there is no mention of their king in the subsequent prediction, the one "nation" to which the Lord should bring them is exchanged for "all peoples from the one end of the earth unto the other end of the earth." It is clear then that the second prophecy contemplates a different set of circumstances, when Israel would be without a king and

the people should be scattered broadcast over the earth. Though the circumstances were to be changed, however, this doom was to be repeated. They were again to serve other gods. The prophecy was first fulfilled in the forfeiture of the Temple tax for the purposes of Roman idolatry. The Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was destroyed by fire on the same day which witnessed the conflagration of the Temple of Jerusalem, and the half-shekel paid by every Jew, no matter where he resided, to support the Temple-service was allotted by the Roman Emperors to the rebuilding and adornment of the shrine of the Roman God. It was in vain the Jews refused to pay. Their resistance was severely punished, and they were compelled to take the money sacred to Jehovah and lay it, so to speak, upon the altar of Jove. The tax was long continued. But this was only an earnest of what lay before them. Neither the heathenism of the Roman Empire, nor that of the so-called Christianity whose priests succeeded to the lordship of the Roman conscience, knew anything of toleration; and we know that even till times comparatively recent, the persecution of this people has been continued. They have been compelled to worship the idols of Roman Catholic Christendom, gods of wood and stone which neither they nor their fathers had known.

It was also predicted that

THEY SHOULD HAVE NO REST.

"And among those nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart which thou shalt fear, and

for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see" (vv. 65-67). "And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out a sword after you" (Lev. xxvi. 33).

The tale which these words recall is, without exception, the most terrible and pathetic in human history. In the beginning of the second century they broke out into insurrection in Babylonia, Egypt, Cyrene, and Cyprus. The rebellion was suppressed with immense bloodshed. They were expelled from Cyprus, and were never after permitted to put a foot upon the island. If a Jew chanced to be wrecked upon its shores he was immediately put to death. It was said that in Egypt as many fell as originally escaped under Moses, namely, 600,000 men. To tell the story of their after persecutions we should have to write their history. They have had periods of rest, but these were only lulls in the storm. The hatred in which they were held was augmented, too, by their own madness. They assisted the Persians, for example, to capture Jerusalem in the beginning of the seventh century, and, after they had butchered their own Christian prisoners, they purchased those of the Persians that they might still further glut their revenge. All this recoiled upon themselves. We know how they suffered during the Crusades. Peter the Hermit was leading his hosts through Germany when the cry ran from lip to lip, "why march against the enemies of Christ when worse enemies are being left behind us!" Their fury was accordingly let loose against the Jews, who were everywhere along the route attacked, plundered, and massacred. Fifty years afterwards a second storm broke upon the Jews of Germany, and fanatical mobs swept the cities of the Rhine, and renewed the former horrors. In the same country they suffered in every popular rising "No fanatic monk," says Milman, "set the populace in commotion, no public calamity took place, no atrocious or extravagant report was

propagated, but it fell upon the heads of this unhappy caste. In Germany the black plague raged in all its fury, and wild superstition charged the Jews, as elsewhere, with causing and aggravating the misery, and themselves enjoying a guilty comparative security amid the universal desolation. Fatal tumults were caused by the march of the Flagellants, a host of mad enthusiasts, who passed through the cities of Germany, preceded by a crucifix, and scourging their naked and bleeding backs as they went as a punishment for their own offences and those of the Christian world. These fanatics atoned for, as they supposed, rather than aggravated, their sins against the God of Mercy, by plundering and murdering the Jews in Frankfort and other places. The same dark stories were industriously propagated, readily believed, and ferociously avenged, of fountains poisoned, children crucified, the Host stolen and outraged. The power of their liege lord and Emperor, recognised by the law of the Empire, even when exerted for their protection, was but slightly respected and feebly enforced, especially where every province and almost every city had or claimed an independent jurisdiction. Still, persecuted in one city they fled to another, and thus spread over the whole of Germany, Brunswick, Austria, Franconia, the Rhine Provinces, Silesia, Brandenburg, Bohemia, Lithuania, and Poland. Oppressed by the nobles, anathematised by the clergy, hated as rivals in trade by the burghers in commercial cities, despised and abhorred by the populace, their existence is known by the chronicle, rarely of protective edicts, more often of their massacres."* The light which afterwards dawned on Christendom, brought, no doubt, alleviation for the lot of the Jew in Germany, as elsewhere, but the regulations of Frederick the Great, show of what cruel arbitrariness a philosophic statesman could be guilty even in the eighteenth century when the fate of the

* *History of the Jews,* iii., pp. 222, 223.

Jew was in question; and we still hear of the *Judenhetze*—Jew-baiting—in that land of philosophy and freedom.

The story of the Jew in England is quite as terrible. They were tortured and robbed by king and nobles, and massacred by the populace. From 500 to 1,500 men with their wives and children perished in a rising in York in the twelfth century. At the end of the thirteenth century their whole property was confiscated, and they were expelled from the kingdom with circumstances of great barbarity. They were not re-admitted till the reign of Charles the Second. We have to repeat the same tale when we turn to France. For a brief period that country was a Paradise to the Jews. One of the two Mayors of Narbonne was always a Jew, and the Jewish quarter in Lyons was the principal part of the city. One of them was sent on an embassy by Charlemagne. They were physicians and ministers to nobles and princes, and the confidential advisers of Louis the Debonnaire. But their eminence and wealth only marked them out the more for after robbery and oppression. They were plundered and enslaved by the children of the nobles whom they had served. Philip Augustus robbed them of their effects and banished them from the kingdom. For a price they were allowed to return. They came back only to be entrapped. Louis VIII. annulled all interest on debts due to them, declared them to be attached to the soil, and assigned them as property to its lords. In 1239 the mobs of Paris rose against them and committed frightful atrocities, which were imitated in other parts of the kingdom. They were finally banished from France at the end of the 14th century, a decree of exclusion which remained in force till 1794. The story of their sufferings in Spain is more harrowing still; but we forbear. There has been again a lull, broken in recent years by the persecutions in Russia. The contempt and hatred with which the

Jews are still regarded there and elsewhere on the continent are well known, and the trembling of heart of which the prophet spoke has not ceased even now.

Let me call attention in closing to another part of their story as told in prophecy. In the book of Hosea, to which we have already referred, we find these remarkable words: "The children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim" (iii. 4). We have here a prophetic description of some of THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PECULIARITIES of the scattered Israelites. We have seen that the Jews were to continue, and that they were to be separate. That they were to be still further separated from the peoples among whom they were to sojourn is evident from this prediction in Hosea. Tempted sorely to turn aside to idolatry, and terribly persecuted because of their refusal, they were nevertheless to preserve their ancient faith: "Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot" (Hosea iii. 3). And now we are told that this separateness would be maintained by a community

DEPRIVED OF ANY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

which might shield and guide them as a people: "The children of Israel shall abide many days without king and without prince." The words have been fulfilled in spite of the strenuous efforts of the Jews to maintain among themselves some central authority. Within 60 years after the revolt under Barcochebas the Jews in the Roman Empire ranged themselves under the patriarch of Tiberias, while the Jews in the Persian dominions gave their allegiance to another of their number who bore the title, the Prince of the Captivity. Both sovereignties flourished for a time. The Patriarch was permitted to appoint ministers, to exercise religious authority, and to receive an annual contribution from the Jews scattered throughout the Em-

pire. "Even now," says Origen, "when the Jews are under the dominion of Rome, and pay the didrachma, how great, by the permission of Cæsar, is the power of their Ethnarch! I myself, have been a witness that it is little less than that of a king. For they secretly pass judgments according to their law, and some are capitally condemned, not with open and acknowledged authority, but with the connivance of the Emperor." The Prince of the Captivity assumed a still greater state. His installation was marked by great ceremony. The magnates of the people assembled in a magnificent chamber adorned with rich curtains, and the Prince was seated on a lofty throne. He resided in a stately palace, and when he went to pay a visit to the sovereign a royal carriage was placed at his service. But the Patriarchate withered away and was brought to a close about 429. And the last Prince of the Captivity perished on the scaffold in the beginning of the eleventh century. An independent kingdom of the Jews, which had been established in Arabia Felix more than a century before the Christian Era, was overthrown by the Mohammedans in the seventh century With these perished every attempt to maintain sovereign authority among the Jews; and they have now been "many days without king and without prince."

They were also to be

"WITHOUT SACRIFICE AND WITHOUT PILLAR."

The patriarchs set up "pillars" here and there during their wanderings, and the expression "without pillar" no doubt signifies that Israel should be deprived even of the simplest and rudest holy-place. How strange the words must have seemed to Israel, and how completely they have been fulfilled, I need not say. Since the destruction of the temple they have neither had sacrifice nor holy-place, and for eighteen centuries their religion has continued, though deprived of all

that seemed to give it expression and to ensure its permanency. They were also to remain

WITHOUT EPHOD OR TERAPHIM.

The ephod was used in the priestly ministrations, and specially in seeking to learn the mind of God. The teraphim appear to have been also used for the purpose of obtaining oracular responses. This part of the description, therefore, implied that the priestly office would cease in Israel, and that all attempts to obtain the direction of what we may call the living voice of God would be given over. In the destruction of Jerusalem and the subsequent troubles which fell upon Judea, the entire priesthood perished,* and since that time there has been neither ephod nor teraphim in Israel. The Rabbi has taken the place of the priest, and the unpretentious and far-off worship of the synagogue has succeeded to the solemn service and the near access of the Temple. But behind all the wrath there is mercy. Judgment paves the way for blessing. Hosea continues: "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King; and shall come with fear unto the Lord and to His goodness in the latter days" (Hos. iii. 5). The fulfillment of the previous words tells that these last are also remembered, and that God's arm, "though strong to smite, is also strong to save."

CONCLUSION.

We began with the question, "What are we to believe?"—has it been answered? Let me remind the reader of two things. On one of them we are all agreed. No one can lift the vail which hides the future, and become the historian of the days that are yet to be. Not even the most experienced or the most

* *History of the Jews*, iii., p. 414.

gifted can tell what will be the political position of any one of the leading countries of Europe at the end of the next 500 years or of the next century, nor paint the condition which its meanest hamlet will present when fifty years have passed away. Great as are the powers of the human intellect, they are limited on the side of the future by sharply defined and utterly impassable boundaries. No man can prophesy. That is one thing which we all admit to be beyond the possibility of question. The second point is that for the readers of these pages it is equally undeniable that Scripture not only contains, but abounds with, genuine prophecies. As our inquiry has proceeded what, in no offensive sense, we may call sceptical explanations have broken down. The predictions were not written after the events, for our case is founded only upon prophecies which have been fulfilled at, or since, the beginning of the Christian era. Then their accomplishment cannot be explained by chance. The predictions are not fortunate guesses, arrows shot at a venture which have happened to hit. The fulfilments are too many, the prophetic descriptions too clear and too full, many of the details too striking and too minute, to admit of their being explained by any such theory. It is plainly impossible to account in that way for the prophetic pictures of Egypt, of Judea and the Jews, of the world's history, of Christ and His work. But, if these predictions are not due to after-knowledge or to chance, there is only one explanation left. *They are the result of foreknowledge.* They tell of thought which holds all generations, past and future, in its grasp, and of purpose, which, perhaps, like the mightier harvests of earth, advances slowly to its fulfilment, but which is nevertheless surely and fully accomplished. In a word, they reveal God. They prove His existence: they manifest Himself; and one cry of the human heart finds its answer there. The existence of God is not a dream. This life of ours is compassed

about with a larger and grander. There is One for us to adore, to love, to lean upon.

Then as we read these predictions another form is revealed. It is a striking fact that the ages have not been suffered to forget the name of Jesus. Neither persecution, nor superstition, nor perversions of the truth, have been able to make the world forget the gospel story, or to silence those who have proclaimed the Redeemer's name. We still look back to Bethlehem, to Nazareth, to Galilee, to Calvary, to Olivet. And just as we look back to-day, so patriarchs and prophets looked forward. We look back through the light of history: they looked forward through a light which anticipated that of history—the light of prophecy. We have seen how the Old Testament from first to last glows with this anticipation, and we have compared forecast with fulfilment. The very fact that it was the unceasing testimony of Scripture that a Son of Abraham, a Jew, should become a light to the Gentiles, and that this Light did rise and is shedding its beams upon us now, is enough to overwhelm doubt; and the picture of His character, of His sufferings, of the nature of His work for us, forms a foundation for our trust, which, till these things be explained away, nothing can shake. And here another cry of the heart is answered. There is a Mediator between God and man: One who is ours, and His: One who is for Him, and who is also for ourselves.

But when these points are settled, they reveal one need more. We desire nearness to our Father and our Redeemer: we thirst for likeness to them. In other words. we cry for light which will reveal them, and make plain our pathway. And need we search further for the answer? Is it not in that book, which is without a peer, and which is stamped as Divine by the impress of knowledge such as man has never boasted? He who has cared for every other want, and who has made need but a pathway into His ful-

ness, has cared for this, the deepest and most clamant want of all. Let us not spurn the gift. Let us not neglect it. It is heaven's light "whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."

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Treatment Date: May 2005

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